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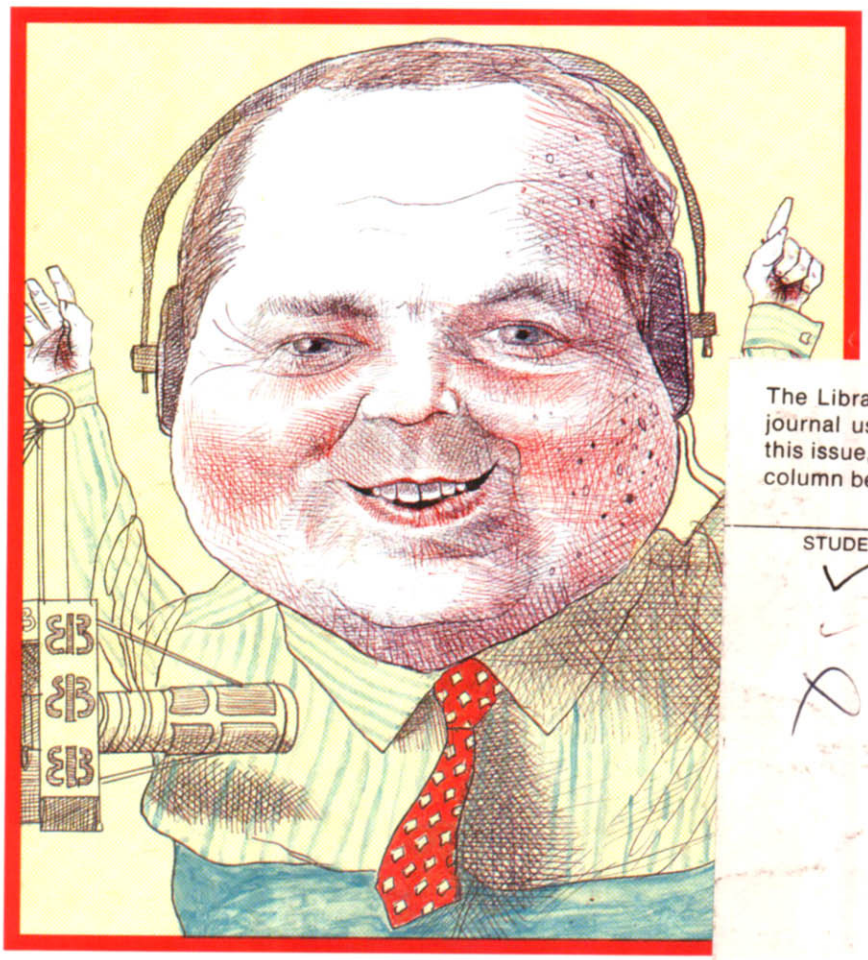
by Terry Eastland



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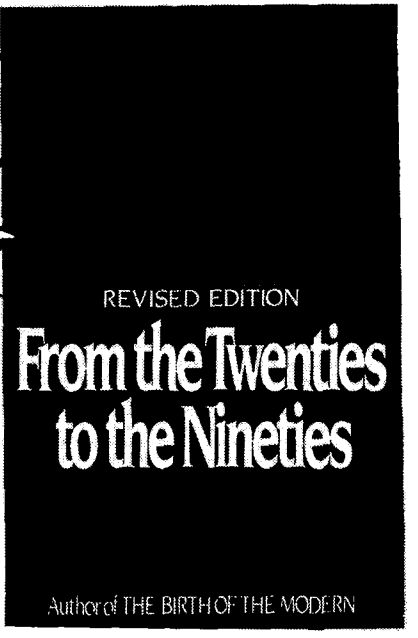

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What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

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Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

AS DEMOCRATS hasten to apply the *coup de grâce* to the Reagan-Bush era by calling for the removal of Dan Quayle from the Republican ticket, it's not a happy time for conservatives. An old friend of the magazine writes, urging me "to tear up the contents and perhaps the cover of your forthcoming issue and to insert a declaration that Bush doesn't deserve to win and that the country would be better served in the long run by a resounding repudiation of his timidity." Virtually everyone he knows well "is nauseated by the failure of both the presidential candidates to make honest statements about the budget-deficit issue." He concludes: "That Perot wimped out after his advisers handed him an honest assessment of how much pain we would have to endure in order to set our house in order speaks volumes about our moral condition."

WHAT IS our moral condition? Last month I pointed to unresolved disputes among conservatives regarding deficits, junk bonds, and other forms of easy credit. This month, Erich Eichman's essay ("Fox on the Run," p. 28) questions the profit motives and double standards of conservatives who flood our popular culture with what not so long ago would have been called smut. At a time when many conservatives are resorting to smug, racialist opposition to immigration, I also heartily recommend Edward Norden's report from post-riot Los Angeles on some beleaguered Americans for whom personal responsibility and community loyalties come as automatically as their belief in the American dream ("South-Central Korea," p. 33).

AND, JUST IN TIME to lift some of the gloom from the Republican convention, we present Terry Eastland's cover story on principled populist Rush Limbaugh ("Talking Back," p. 22), and Pete du Pont's travel piece from what is still Cold War Asia ("Tigers by the Tail," p. 41). It was Governor du Pont, you'll remember, whose call in 1988 for honest talk about entitlement programs led candidate George Herbert Walker Bush to address him, sneeringly, as "Pierre." This year in Houston, look for Bush to apologize. Anything to win!

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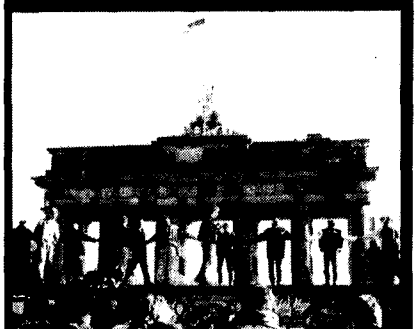

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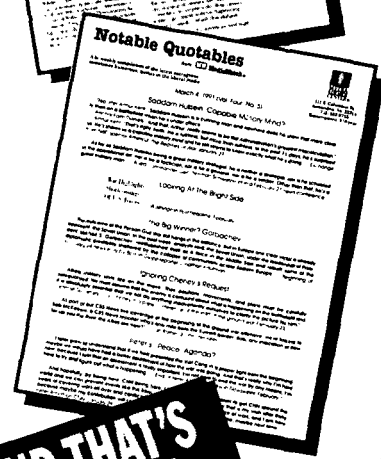

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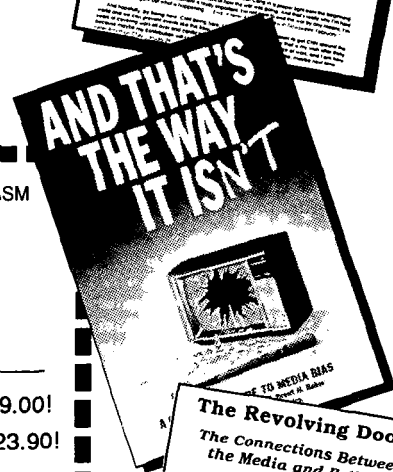

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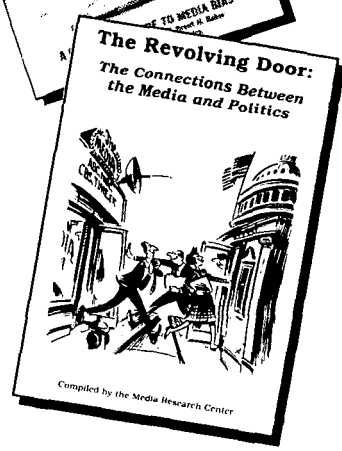

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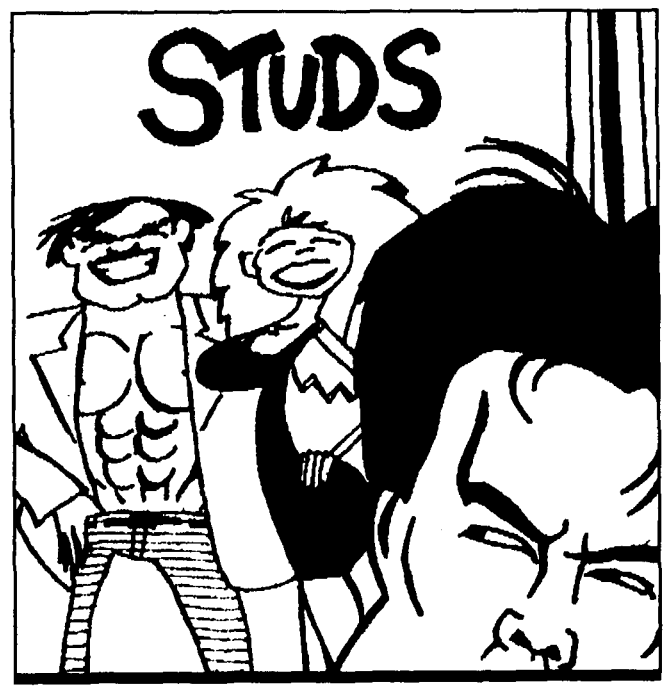

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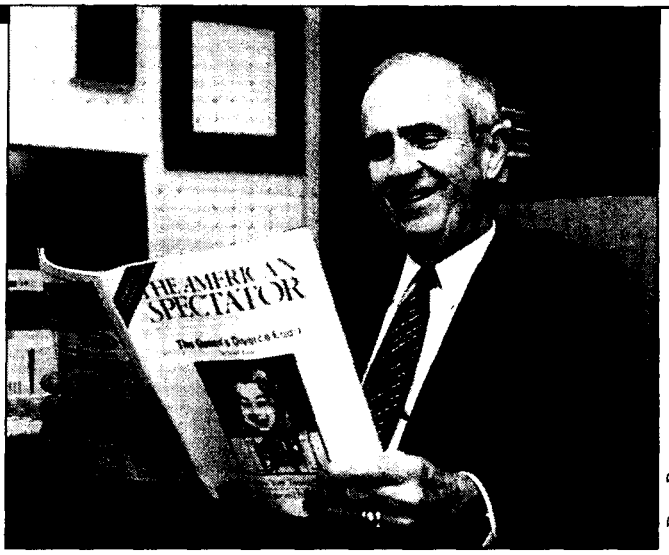

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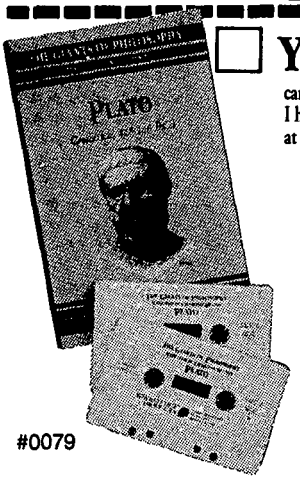

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• July turned out to be the month the staff of this magazine has been waiting for ever since April, when Mr. H. Ross Perot's presidential candidacy first swept through the press. At *The American Spectator*'s monthly editorial dinner we noted Mr. Perot's record of defaulting on political promises and governmental projects and predicted that history would recognize all his boasts about a presidential race as the "April Follies." As his months of insufferable guff dragged on, we spoke of his "Spring Follies." Finally, after being called "a total greenhorn" and "almost definitely a loser" by us, Mr. Perot finally threw in the towel. So did Mr. Al Hunt of the *Wall Street Journal*. On a July 13 airing of "The Capital Gang," the squitter-witted Mr. Hunt referred to this distinguished magazine of the arts as "neo-fascist" for having published Daniel Wattenberg's exposé of Hillary Clinton last month. Of course, one of our favorite arts is the art of self-defense, and a few days later Mr. Hunt backed down with a characteristically mealy-mouthed apology. Are we appeased? Time will tell. Boy Clinton received the Democratic presidential nomination.

• It has happened again! Unbidden, a half-naked young man surreptitiously entered Buckingham Palace on the afternoon of July 20 and ascended a staircase leading to Queen Elizabeth II's private chambers. Palace security officials would reveal neither the man's name nor which half of him was naked. They did, however, reassure the public that the young man never made contact with their pulchritudinous monarch, and that his sole intention was political protest. Unfortunately the youth has remained hopelessly vague as to the details of his protest and none of the world's many protest movements has yet claimed him. The debate over family values spread to Australia when an eminent theologian, Dr. Barbara Thiering, posited that Jesus Christ was a divorced father of three.

• The Department of Labor's unemployment figure for June rose to 7.8 percent, the highest level since March 1984. Hopes brightened for finally doing something about General Manuel Noriega's appalling acne when federal judge William Hoeveler sentenced the ruddy-faced tyrant to forty years' imprisonment and unlimited access to the penal system's incomparable staff of dermatologists. The good news seemed to be lost on General Noriega, who appeared glum and totally oblivious to the salubrious life that awaits him. Russian

president Boris Yeltsin reached a lending agreement with the IMF that will reinforce his economic reforms, and the conservative Heritage Foundation announced plans to open a Moscow branch in office space thitherto rented by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

• The senseless persecution of manliness continues. In Stafford, England, Mr. Jerry Farrell, 29, was ordered to do sixty hours of community service for boiling his pet gerbil in a deep-fat fryer. Mr. Farrell, who thought he was entertaining his chums when he lowered the pet by its tail into the hot oil, was also barred from keeping pets for four years. In Paoli, Indiana, Mr. William Trent Marshall, 27, got fifteen years for the November 1990 killing of his grandfather during a disagreement over the proper method of cleaning a turkey; and in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, they threw the book at Mr. DeWitt Smith, 44, after he bit Common Pleas Judge Walter Little during his sentencing for a prior indiscretion.

• Yet the male of the species can apparently still have some fun. In Nongoma, South Africa, King Goodwill Zwelethini, hereditary monarch of seven million Zulus, took his fifth wife. In Swaziland, King Mswati, 24, announced plans to marry his eighth wife (his father had more than 100 before his shocking death in 1982); and even in McLean, Virginia, a fellow can unwind. There on July 5 well-known *rastaquouère* Senator Edward M. Kennedy married his second wife, a Washington lawyer. Sarajevo continued to receive the uninvited attentions of Serbian gunners, and the United Nations and the NATO powers weighed their options. New Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin announced a cabinet of markedly dovish repute after an Israeli research institute honored Mikhail Gorbachev by naming a new potato after him. The animal rights movement suffered an unexpected setback when surgeons in Pittsburgh transplanted the liver of a baboon into the body of an anonymous 35-year-old man whose original liver had been destroyed by hepatitis B.

• In Sheffield, England, pigeon-keeper Pat Lees's thoroughbred carrier pigeon beat 300 other entrants in a race from France, but his victory was short-lived. Whilst the joyous Mr. Lees approached his exhausted bird to remove its leg tag, a hungry cat pounced on it, devouring

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most of the bird's vital organs and preventing Mr. Lees from retrieving the tag before another pigeoneer had claimed the race's £100 prize. Despite the spread of many serious sexually transmitted diseases, the U.S. Patent Office continues to drag its feet on patent number 4,919,149, that being the one for a flavored condom invented by Mr. Michael Stang of Pikesville, Maryland. In Buffalo, New York, a jury decided that the local Leonardo da Vinci, Mr. Billie Lawless, was not entitled to damages stemming from Mayor James Griffin's decision to dismantle a sculpture placed by Mr. Lawless on an Urban Renewal plot. The sculpture, named "Green Lightning," depicted numerous dancing penises in top hats, which apparently did not sufficiently conceal the terpsichorean members. After many complaints from Congressman Barney Frank about *Roll Call* magazine's reluctance to picture him with his better half, Mr. Herb Moses, *Roll Call* relented, picturing the happy couple on page 12 after a Congressional Wives' Tea for Mrs. Hillary Clinton and Mrs. Tipper Gore on July 13. An official gold "spouse" button on Mr. Moses's lapel testified to this latest Democratic breakthrough.

• In Buenos Aires, Mr. Astor Piazzola, the world's foremost tango composer, passed away at 71. Prominent anthropologist John Buettner-Janusch, distinguished in labor causes, civil rights protest, and his stalwart opposition to the Vietnam war, died in a medical center for federal prisoners in Springfield, Missouri, at the age of 67. He was serving a twenty-year term for attempting to murder the judge who had presided over his earlier drug trial. British conservatism lost one of its most eloquent proponents for the death penalty when Mr. Albert Pierrepoint died quietly in Southport, England. Mr. Pierrepoint was a second-generation hangman, who had hanged more people for the British Crown in this century than any of his competitors. In one 24-hour period he dispatched 27 scoundrels. He was 87.

•The celebrated Mr. Rodney King was again arrested in Los Angeles, though less spectacularly than when he was beaten back in March of 1991, and even more peacefully than when he was arrested late in June. Another Stanford University faculty member has been convicted of sexual irregularities: Mr. Keith Archuleta was sentenced to four years probation for secretly videotaping coeds as they undressed. Mr. Archuleta, who since 1988 has been Stanford assistant dean in charge of the Black Student Union, had recently led the campus protests against the acquittal of Mr. Rodney King's assailants. Finally, hats off to Mr. Philip S. Whaley, Sr., 42, of Syracuse, New York. His faithful adherence to the rules of the road during a 28-minute auto chase with police led to his arrest on charges of possession of stolen property, grand larceny, driving while intoxicated, reckless endangerment, reckless driving, and resisting arrest. Mr. Whaley used his turning signal steadfastly and, according to Investigator Gerard Verrillo, "at every turn, we knew exactly where he was going." Nice going, Phil!

—RET

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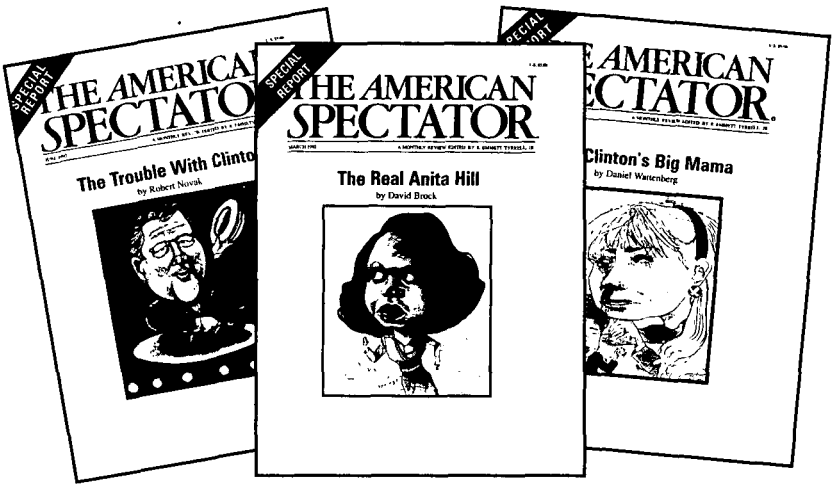

Copies of Michael Fumento's report on Magic Johnson and AIDS (February 1992), David Brock's investigation of Anita Hill (March 1992), Robert Novak's report on Bill Clinton (June 1992) and Daniel Wattenberg's report on the *real* Hillary Clinton (August 1992) are available to *American Spectator* readers. These reports are ideal for distribution to your friends, business colleagues, teachers, and political representatives. Send for your copies today.

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Down to Size

Michael Fumento displays a profound misunderstanding when he says, in "Fetal Attraction" (*TAS*, July 1992), that we pro-lifers "believe that the more developed the fetus, the more heinous the act" of abortion. Exactly backwards! The entire logic of our position hangs precisely on the insight that the morality of killing does *not* depend on the age or size of the person being killed. —*John Woolley*
Arlington, Virginia

A GAO Whistleblower

Bravo for Edward McFadden and his article on the General Accounting Office ("There's No Accounting for Congress," *TAS*, July 1992). He has them down cold, and it is only too bad this has not been said before and louder.

I was a 25-year employee of the Executive Branch and during most of my time, my duties included the preparation of answers to GAO reports. About twenty years ago, as McFadden says, this once-respected agency began to fall apart, and reports became obviously partisan and predictable. Sometime during the Carter Administration, I began betting with fellow employees: you tell me the title of the report and which congressman requested it and I will tell you the conclusions. I have yet to lose. I once tried my game on a fairly high-level GAO executive. He refused to play.

There are potentially much worse consequences than just partisanship. In the 1960s, GAO and other government auditors were respected and feared. When a report came in to an agency, staffers jumped through hoops to comply with the recommendations and write a reply showing problem areas had been corrected. By 1980 this attitude was gone. The disappearance coincided with a new GAO emphasis on "Performance Audits"—not audits so much as judgments on the effectiveness of programs. The reports soon skirted the facts so widely that if any real crunch came, they could easily be refuted. No one bothered with corrective measures. The same attitude began to be shown toward internal audits. So much for Jimmy Carter and his "Junkyard Dogs."

This state of affairs ought to scare the public to death. In effect it means the system of checks and balances has been corrupted to the point of disappearing. I never thought I would say it, but: GAO, where are you when we need you?

McFadden also hits upon a large part of the cause of the problem: GAO only hires at the entrance level, new college grads with degrees in accounting who have no experience at all. They have no idea how an agency works and they are never put anywhere they can learn. The consequent judgments on "performance" are worthless even when they do not happen to be partisan. —*S. J. Park*
Austin, Texas

Price is Right

Terry Eastland provided an excellent critique ("Hill's Rats," *TAS*, July 1992) of the news coverage of the "iron triangle" of liberal Senate staffers, interest groups, and reporters that tried to stop Justice Thomas's nomination. It seems to me that the media's lack of curiosity, as recounted by Eastland, was no less egregious on the subject of Professor Hill's polygraph test.

While a number of newspapers described the limitations of polygraph tests *in general*, only the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Times* took note of the none-too-distinguished track record of the particular polygraph examiner hired by Professor Hill's team. Those papers were the only ones to mention that the examiner, Paul Minor, had previously bungled two other high-profile cases.

One case, in 1980, involved a U.S. attorney in California who had been accused of accepting a bribe. The man denied the allegations; Minor concluded the man was lying. Other polygraph experts later reviewed Minor's work and found his methodology to be seriously flawed and his results to be wrong. Minor conceded he had made errors and apologized. In 1989, Minor conducted a polygraph test on male prosititute Stephen Gobie, and concluded that Gobie was lying about his relationship with Rep. Barney Frank. Rep. Frank's later admissions made it clear that Gobie's statements were accurate.

At the press conference on October 13, 1991, when Professor Hill's lawyers announced the results of the polygraph test, Minor was asked, "Have you had cases where you later found out that the polygraph did not accurately report?" Minor gave the amazing reply, "I've heard of such cases, but I don't know that I've ever had one. I don't think so."
—*David Price*
Washington, D.C.

Who's the Boss?

I read "Unheavenly Cities" (*TAS*, July 1992) with great interest. I think Bob Tyrrell is quite right to suggest that bureaucratic intercessions have worsened urban pathologies of poverty, crime, and dependency, and that our streets were safer, schools better, and families stronger under the aegis of machine politics. Compared to professional victims and droning welfare bureaucrats who would rather rationalize violence and hatred than act to curb lawlessness, political bosses of the late nineteenth-century were principled, pragmatic, and extravagantly responsive to their constituents. As Tammany stalwart George Washington Plunkitt once told a reporter: "If a family is burned out . . . I don't refer them to the Charity Organization Service . . . I just get quarters for them, buy clothes for them if their clothes were burned up, and fix them up 'til they get things running agin." No wonder that, as Thomas Sowell writes in *Ethnic America*, "the poor usually ended up preferring corrupt politicians, who understood them, to distant theorists, who did not." In this "60 Minutes" age, we can't go back to corrupt, albeit effective, patronage politics. But we also can't stay where we are. This status quo must not stand.

Tyrrell's shrewd, persuasive editorial will help re-invigorate debate on the subject. —*James P. Pinkerton*
Washington, D.C.

Cuban Jim Crow

The mythology of Castroism is pervasive enough in the mainstream media and academia. Now we read it in your magazine—one of the few places intelligent people can seek solace. Patrick Symmes writes that "one of the worst sins of the Batista regime was that it allowed privileged enclaves where Cubans worked only as busboys and

(continued on page 70)

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Dramatic Democrats

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

New York

The Democrats have returned from the Big Apple! But they are scarcely the boisterous, ebullient bunch from days gone by. Fruit juice tipplers have replaced most of the beer guzzlers and dispelled the cigar smoke. The party of Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion is now the party of Yoghurt, Yoga, and Bumper Stickers.

Yet this is unquestionably a great political apparatus. True, the party is at odds with itself—"odd" being the *mot juste*—but the Democratic party contains the most prodigious collection of political dramatists ever assembled in a party, short of National Socialism's or Marxist-Leninism's spellbinders. For half a century the Democrats have given us practically all of our political myths, melodramas, epics, and even our barbaric political superstitions. They have come up with our catchiest slogans and prettiest lapel pins, and I, for one, am still touched by that little girl back in 1964 who picked the daisy that blew up the world.

The Republicans at their best are the party of scare tactics, mudslinging, and Willie Horton—we have this on the authority of our transcontinental corps of Democratic writers and pundits. The Democrats at their best are the party of *Camelot*, *Sunrise at Campobello*, and *Give 'em Hell, Harry*. In this century only one Republican has surpassed his Democratic adversaries in the art of self-dramatization, and that was Ronald Reagan, an ex-Democrat.

In recent years, as the fragmentation and radicalization of the Democratic party has worsened, its idealists and tireless campaigners have actually sharpened their artistic skills, transforming themselves into legendary figures and their ideas into The American Credo. Consider Governor Clinton. He is Georgetown-schooled and Oxford-trimmed. He is a modern, progressive cosmopolitan who remains vulnerable to the hallelujah wails of that old-time religion. He is a policy whiz kid but with a special touch for the poor, the black, the unlettered. Naturally, he is a jogger and widely read. He is Huck Finn and Holden Caulfield and almost any Kennedy. Consider Governor Cuomo. He is a ballplayer. He is a tough guy. He is large-souled. He can cry in public, but get mad too.

He also is a reader—all Democrats are readers!—partial to Teilhard de Chardin, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Garry Wills. He is a supra-Catholic, pious but superior to priests, nuns, and his local cardinal, with whom he is in a spectacular metaphysical row. He is a scholar of A. Lincoln and perhaps St. Augustine. He flays George Bush over the American economy, though the Hon. Cuomo's state and its largest city, the financial center of America, are practically in bankruptcy. No contradiction is too grotesque for his powder and mascara. He is numbered among the grandest orators of our age, along with the Rev. Jesse Jackson and someone by the name of Ann Richards.

Do you detect incongruities? Fear not, the Democrats' political dramatists will blend them all into compelling legends. They have done it so many times before. They turned an artless rube from Plains, Georgia, known for his mean streak, into a loving humanitarian, too good for Washington and too bright for politics (as though being bright and being ignorant are irreconcilable). They took a rich Harvard patrician from the 1900s and an equally rich Harvard playboy from the 1940s and turned both into statesmen with an uncommon empathy for poverty, suffering, being black—in sum, things they knew little about. Would not a rich

(continued on page 16)

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. is editor-in-chief of The American Spectator. *This article is an adapted and expanded version of an essay that appeared in the* Wall Street Journal.

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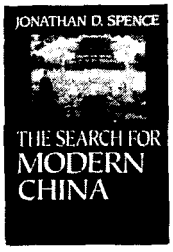

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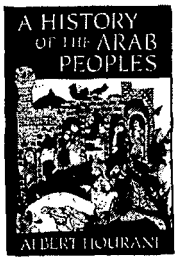

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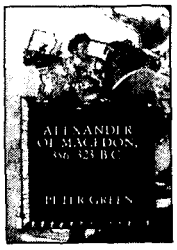

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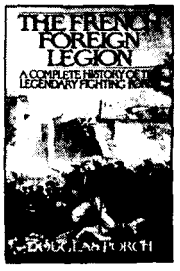

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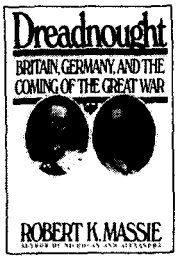

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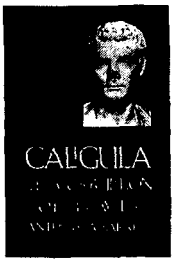

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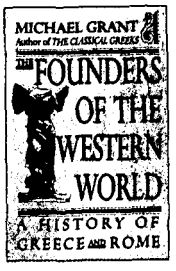

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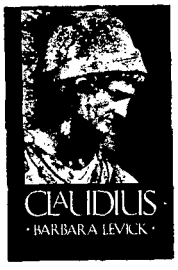

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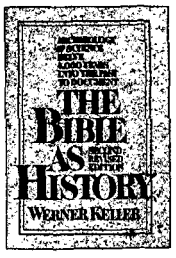

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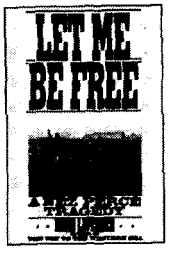

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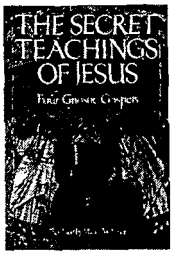

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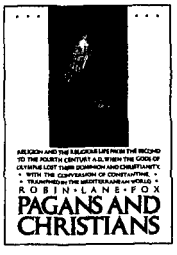

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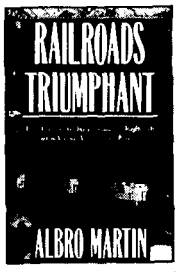

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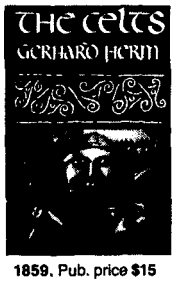

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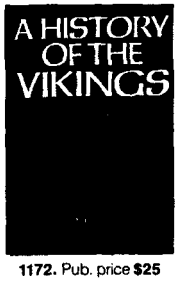

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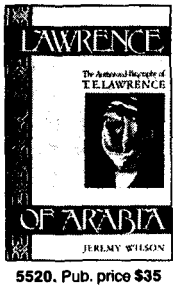

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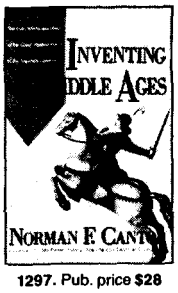

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Yale-bred patrician, heroic in war and seasoned in the rough-and-tumble of Texas business, covet such a team of dramatists?

I have in mind, of course, George Bush, but take my word for it—he is almost wholly oblivious to such artistry. He is a Republican. After much research and meditation, I have come to the conclusion that Republicans (conservatives) and Democrats (liberals) have vastly different temperaments. Alas, it is not in the conservative temperament to dramatize one's political ideas or persona. George Bush resists the suggestion that he transform his private behavior into public virtue. That, he would complain, is "scripting" a life; and he is against scripting. Being a gentleman of conservative temperament, he believes his private life should remain private and unmarketed, though I have personally gathered much incriminating evidence that George Bush is a reader, a thinker, and a man in sympathy with humanity.

The Democrats in our time have mastered what we shall call "masked politics." Like guests at a masked ball the Democrats don attractive disguises. Republicans do not have the guile for masks. The Democrats recognize the usefulness of masking their belief in government regulation, high taxation, and social engineering behind the diverting costumes and sonorous dicta of the environmentalist, the consumerist, the feminist, and so forth. When the Republican is faced by one of these masked politicians he has not the wit to recognize that he is looking into the face of a Democrat and responding to a Democrat's demands. He thinks he is simply responding to the noble desiderata of America's political culture. Consequently, to a large extent, the Democrats control its values and rhetoric. As I have elaborated in my recent book *The Conservative Crack-Up*, the Democrats have successfully polluted American political culture with their political ideas and panaceas. They have created a *Kultursmog*. All Americans are victimized by it. When George Bush responded to what he perceived to be a national clamoring for a balanced budget, a clean air act, and quotas, he was caught in the *Kultursmog* of his political adversaries. There are effective conservative policy responses to the good causes of fiscal responsibility, the environment, and civil rights, but they are not to be found in the polluted atmosphere created by the furtive practitioners of masked politics.

For Republicans to stand steadfastly by their conservative principles they will have to avail themselves of their own dramatists. Very few of them recognize the need. For them to dispel the *Kultursmog* they will have to expand the size of the conservative counterculture created in recent decades by a string of conservative think tanks and intellectual magazines. Until they take such action they will be trapped in the Democrats' *Kultursmog*, responding to the liberals' legends and bugaboos.

That, as the present presidential campaign makes clear, is ruinous for Republicans. Eric Breindel, the astute editorial-page editor of the *New York Post*, observed the other day, "There's nothing remotely healthy about this state of affairs. A corrupt public discourse promotes an unwillingness to face reality. And problems can't be resolved unless they're named and acknowledged."

We are now well into the second longest Republican presidential ascendency of this century. Twelve years into Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal the culture of America was alive with New Deal enthusiasms and enthusiasts. The enthusiasts were writers, artists, policy makers, for instance, Robert E. Sherwood, Virgil Thomson, and Rexford G. Tugwell. Pulitzer and other prizes had been won by New Dealers active in and out of government. Who from the Bush Administration has made a similar appearance in our culture? And, for that matter, did President Reagan's administration do any better?

In part this is because the keepers of the *Kultursmog* are not the champions of pluralism and diversity that they claim to be. Yet conservatives, with their belief in markets, could have done better than merely cry "liberal bias." They could have employed their own conservative political dramatists, who have been proliferating at the conservative think tanks and magazines for years. During both the Reagan and the Bush Administrations, Republican leaders were urged to bring in their own intellectuals, as did JFK and FDR, and then—following the Democrats' example—send them off into high-profile government positions, conferring on them the prestige that they need to fight the battles of cultural politics outside government.

What is more, Republicans could have given their own journalists access to the White House. They could have encouraged books, articles, documentaries. Friendly Democratic writers set out whole bookshelves of hagiography even during the Carter drear. The Democratic output for those four years dwarfs the Republican output for the last twelve. The Republicans could have opened their administrations to friendly artists and thinkers; they never did. Given this obtuseness, they ought not to complain too loudly about "liberal bias in the media."

With their obvious money-raising talents, the Republicans could have acted even more ambitiously than the New Dealers and New Frontiersmen. In fact, they still have time. Adam Meyerson, the gifted editor of the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review*, urges that former secretary of education Bill Bennett be set the task of founding a first-rate conservative university. Twenty years and $150 million ought to do the trick. Then, too, the conservatives need a television network. The corporation that owns ABC is run by Republicans of a distinctly conservative stripe. Surely these executives ought to perceive the profitability of breaking with the conformity of the other networks, the same kind of conformity that led Detroit to lose much of its market to Europe's and Japan's diverse products. If ABC is not interested in increasing its market, certainly Rupert Murdoch should be.

Finally, such information producers as the *Washington Times* and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* have demonstrated that there are alternatives to the *Kultursmog*'s conception and presentation of news and commentary. Great Britain's conservatives have seen the value of challenging their left's dominance of culture. British conservatives now control something like half of British media—and they recently kept control of #10 Downing Street in a squeaker. But let us not remind our Democrats of that unhappy event. Let us congratulate them on the power of their pens even as we hope they run out of ink this fall. ❐

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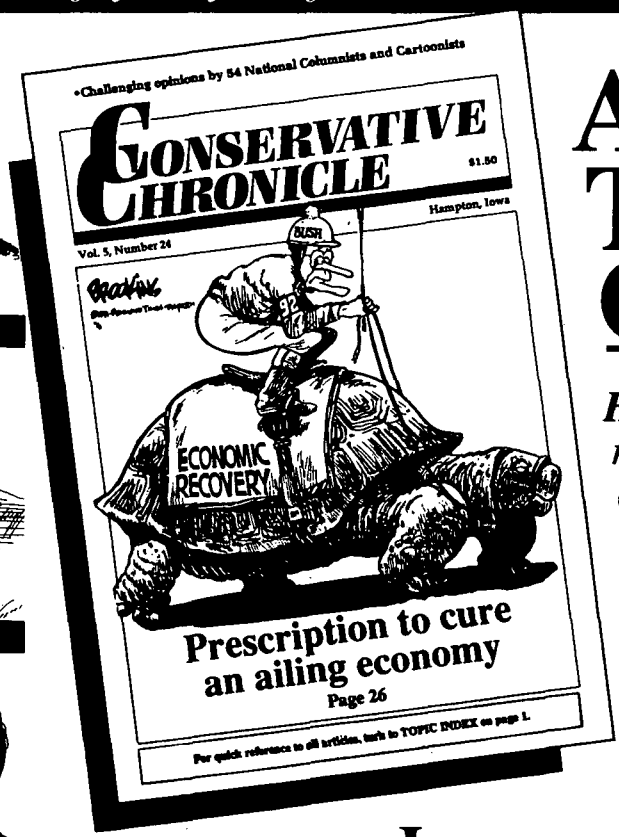
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Strange New Respect, 1992

by Tom Bethell

In recognition of his school prayer and abortion rulings, Justice Anthony Kennedy recently received the Strange New Respect Award for 1992. The award ceremony, attended by prominent journalists, was held in the Georgetown garden of a retired Washington publisher. I was fortunate enough to attend, the ground rules specifying that no one present, other than Kennedy himself, could be identified. The award was actually presented by a well-known liberal columnist with a northeastern newspaper, who has become a tremendous Kennedy admirer. To those who may not have heard, the Strange New Respect Award is given to political figures who betray their conservative supporters after moving to Washington. Such people are usually said to have "grown."

Kennedy, of course, went to the Supreme Court with strong support among conservatives and pro-lifers, and a general expectation that he would not let them down. Now he has "surprised friend and foe alike." He has also hired a law clerk trained by Laurence Tribe, Harvard's best-known progressive thinker.

Kennedy was also honored with the prestigious Taney Medal, which from time to time is awarded to justices who uphold the neglected constitutional doctrine that "the legislative will must remain subordinate to the judicial power of the Supreme Court." The most recent recipient was Justice Harry Blackmun. The medal is named after Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, who presided over an 1857 ruling of the court, *Dred Scott* v. *Sandford*, which oddly prefigures *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973).

In its recent case, *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, the Court reaffirmed *Roe*, with three of the five justices appointed by Reagan and Bush (O'Connor and Souter, in addition to Kennedy) joining Blackmun and Stevens. Everyone at the ceremony was delighted and even surprised that Republican Presidents had managed—from the point of view of their supporters—to choose so poorly. Kennedy was feted for his "growth," and reporters present were smiling broadly at rumors (thought to emanate from Kennedy's law clerks) that the Justice has become very attentive to his newsclips. His "courage" was much praised, but there was a certain amount of grumbling at Robert Bork's contrary view that the *Casey* ruling was "intensely popular with just about everybody Justices care about: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the three network news programs, law school faculties, and at least 90 percent of the people Justices may meet at Washington dinner parties."

In the *Dred Scott* case, Chief Justice Taney found that, constitutionally, Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in the Territories, because such a prohibition would constitute a "taking" of private property. In *Roe*, Blackmun found that, constitutionally, state legislatures had no power to prohibit abortion in the states, because such a prohibition would interfere with the "right to privacy." Both cases used constitutional rhetoric to preempt legislative action. Taney, like Kennedy, was a Catholic and a decent fellow who was "personally opposed" to slavery and "personally kind to Negroes," according to one of his biographers. But he would not allow his personal beliefs to interfere with his judicial duties as he saw them. Slaves, like the unborn, were not considered to be "fully human," but were to be regarded as the property of their owners (mothers).

Dred Scott was a slave, but at least he emerged from his encounter with the Supreme Court in one piece. "This doughty gentleman of color has become the hero of the day, if not of the age," the St. Louis *Washington Union* reported in 1857. Barnum's Hotel in St. Louis supported him as a public attraction, "and while life lasted he enjoyed himself hugely," according to another Taney biographer. Taney was praised by some newspapers ("The decision in the Dred Scott case must be a *finality*, so far as federal legislation is concerned," the Richmond *Enquirer* editorialized), reviled by others, and as for himself, serenely confident "that this act of my judicial life will stand the test of time and the sober judgment of the country."

It was widely expected at the ceremony that Justice Souter would also win Strange New Respect. He had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Kennedy in the abortion and prayer cases. Three days after the Casey decision was announced, Fox Butterfield wrote a Souter Has Grown story for the *New York Times*, a good specimen of the genre, and in writing it Butterfield in effect nominated Souter for the award. But there was a last-minute decision to withhold it from the reclusive Justice, because of an apparent and little-noted conflict of interest in the abortion case.

During Souter's confirmation hearings in September 1990, Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus testified that in February 1973, when Souter was a member of the board of trustees of Concord Hospital, "he participated in a unanimous decision that abortion be performed at that hospital. . . . Similarly, Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital, which is associated with the Dartmouth Medical School, has performed abortions up to the end of the second trimester. During

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent and a media fellow at the Hoover Institution.*

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the period of Mr. Souter's tenure as a decision-maker of these two institutions, many hundreds of abortions were performed under his authority, with no indication that he ever objected to or protested the performance of these abortions."

Souter had gone much further than merely claiming abortion should be legal. As Phillips said, he joined the court as "an accomplice to abortion," giving him a personal stake in the issue. It was as though a member of Taney's court had voted against Dred Scott while being a trustee of a market where slaves also happened to be sold. (Taney had shown "sensitivity" by manumitting his personal slaves before coming to the Court.) "Under the circumstances," the columnist Joseph Sobran has written for *Human Life Review*, "is it likely that [Souter] would have voted to overturn *Roe*? Could he even rule impartially on it, when to reverse that decision might imply something awful about his own willing part in promoting abortion in private life?" Souter's role as a hospital overseer for many years "makes problematic the propriety of his ruling on a question that could reflect so keenly on his own past. He came to the Court with a personal interest in the legitimacy of *Roe*."

Because of this cloud, it was regretfully decided to deny Souter an award this year. People who "grow" must be quite above suspicion before they can win Washington's glittering prizes, and we can only assume that Butterfield didn't know about the Concord Hospital, for he said nothing about it. But the committee is still enthusiastic about Souter and sees him as one of the most promising Republicans in years, outside of Kennedy himself. (Justice O'Connor, it's widely conceded, already grew years ago.) Since Souter can count on accolades and media glory if he continues to grow as a Justice, he can no doubt be expected to rule soundly in the future.

At the ceremony, the written opinion of Souter, Kennedy, and O'Connor was praised as "a magnificent example of Republican jurisprudence." Radical precedent was upheld (and *Roe* indeed was radical) with suitable obeisance to *stare decisis*. Footnotes and tiny demurrals sufficed to avoid the appearance of mere slavishness. That is the way the Washington establishment likes and expects Republicans to behave; Kennedy, Souter, and O'Connor did not disappoint. "They are the real conservatives," I heard it said a dozen times as I strolled about the R Street garden.

There was also some quiet grumbling amid the backslapping, on account of the inept admission by the center-holding trio that they weren't entirely sure that *Roe* had been properly decided in the first place. In withholding judgment on the correctness of *Roe* and then meekly upholding it, the centerholders, it was felt, had unnecessarily given the game away. They had shown, rather too conspicuously, that they were responding to the very public pressure they had decried.

I also heard expressions of surprise at George Bush's response. He oddly boasted that the ruling showed he had told the truth when he claimed there had been "no litmus test" for Souter. He seemed to think his own truthfulness was at stake, rather than the Court's integrity. Bush's inopportune self-vindication told the Washington establishment what it did not expect to hear from him, that he is really not too concerned about the way the Court rules on abortion. He might more logically have taken credit for appointing Clarence Thomas, who did not betray those who supported his nomination.

A couple of days after its Souter-has-grown story, the *New York Times* attacked Justice Thomas for not following Souter's "pattern of growth." Here we come to an unreported aspect of the story. An increasing percentage of women seeking abortions are black; for every three black babies born, two are aborted; black women are more than twice as likely to get abortions as white women. At least 400,000 black pregnancies are aborted each year; 70 percent of Planned Parenthood clinics are in black and Hispanic neighborhoods. As Michael K. Flaherty pointed out in last month's issue, Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger wrote that "we do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members."

Hmmmmm. Is it possible that word of this somehow got out to Justice Thomas even though the news is not fit to print? There is, no doubt, considerable right-wing support for abortion today, but its basis is carefully left unstated—at least in print. A right-winger I know is *particularly* in favor of subsidized abortions. Here's an angle on racism that journalists *don't* want to dig into. It might be a little uncomfortable for their choice-promoting feminist friends to see who their real bedfellows are. Harken unto abortionist Edward Allred, quoted in the *San Diego Union* as saying: "When a sullen black woman of 17 or 18 can decide to have a baby and get welfare and food stamps and become a burden to us all, it's time to stop. In parts of South Los Angeles, having babies for welfare is the only industry the people have."

A little more of Allred & Co. in print and blacks might become more suspicious of the abortion-promoting liberals they have faithfully followed for years. But it's worth noting that the published expression of right-wing (as opposed to merely conservative) opinion is taboo in the U.S. today. The taboo is faithfully observed by conservatives. Liberals, by contrast, relish the added leverage provided by those on their own side but further to the left, and they are delighted not to have to contend with the full spectrum of opposition from the right. If books like *The Rising Tide of Color*, written by Lothrop Stoddard (Ph.D., Harvard) were still published by respectable houses (Scribner's), those who support abortion on ostensibly liberal grounds might also come under suspicion of liking its demographic outcome. Liberals *are* big supporters of population control in the Third World, after all, not to mention subsidized abortions here.

Don't expect the *New York Times* to play up minority abortions any time soon, then. Recently, however, the maverick Nicholas Von Hoffman wrote a bold column, published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, applauding the Court's ruling. Although he avoided any mention of blacks, he did say that the people who are aborted are just the kind who would be confronting us with Uzis later in life if they were not. Disdaining the evasive rhetoric of "choice," he came right out and applauded the sociological outcome of abortion on demand. A breakthrough, if I'm not mistaken. I'm sorry he couldn't make it for the Strange New Respect award. Nick is a sociable old cove and I think he would have been delighted to pin the Taney Medal on Kennedy's chest. ❐

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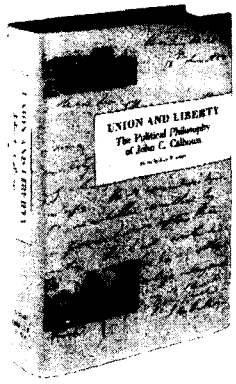

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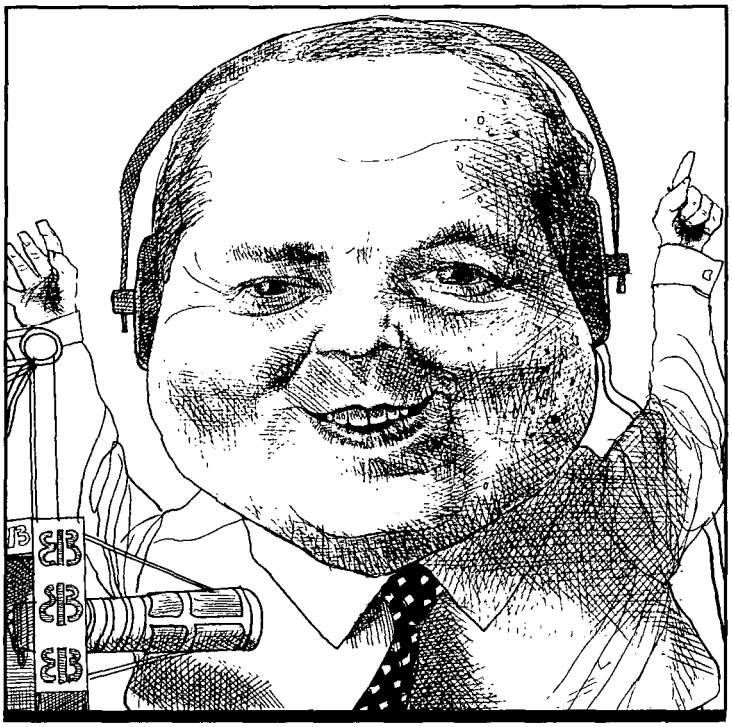

The Dollar Rent-A-Car shuttle is carrying me and my family across the non-fruited plain of the Dallas–Fort Worth Airport. The driver spends much of his day in this bus, which of course comes with a radio, and in Dallas you can get the show on KUII 1190. It's on three hours a day, five days a week, on over five hundred stations coast to coast, and my driver is one of the 12 million who listen to him daily.

"Yes, I listen to Rush," he says. "And the scary thing is, I agree with him."

Scary? Perhaps my driver has been intimidated by what Rush Limbaugh calls the "dominant media culture," for only a hidebound liberal could be afraid of what Limbaugh has to say. Limbaugh is a political conservative for whom no hyphen is necessary: neither neo- nor paleo- nor anything else. In this he is much like his hero, Ronald Reagan. What's more, he has a rock-'n'-roll energy that busts the conventional image of the conservative as unfunny and out of it. Or maybe it's Limbaugh's shameless braggadocio, his apologetic admission that he is right only "97.9 percent of the time." Or maybe it's the weird, even tasteless stuff that sometimes finds its way onto the show—such as Limbaugh's recent discussion with several callers about lamb and pig castration.

Four years after it started, "The Rush Limbaugh Show" enjoys the largest audience of any radio talk show since the advent of television. No longer is it possible to say, as Limbaugh does, that he is just "a radio guy." When ABC's "Nightline" did a program last February on environmentalism's declining appeal, it chose to pit against Sen. Al Gore not another politician but Rush H. Limbaugh III. "What I intended by [having

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him on]," Ted Koppel, a frequent Limbaugh listener, told *Vanity Fair*, "was an acceptance of what he clearly has become over the last two or three years, and that is something of an icon to millions of conservative listeners around the country."

Likewise, last July, when William Bennett made his first appearance as a Heritage Foundation fellow in that institution's *Policy Review*, he did so not as an interviewee, but as an interviewer . . . of Rush Limbaugh. The questions included: "What accounts for Ross Perot's popularity?" "What are the most important issues for the elections this year?" "How would you cut the $400-billion deficit?" "Are you worried about our third century . . . about the balkanization of American life . . . about radical feminism?" It's rare that a radio personality gets to answer such substantive questions—especially a college dropout like Limbaugh.

"He's very smart," Koppel says. "He does his homework. He is well informed." And he is a star. Bennett tells the story of eating dinner in a restaurant with Limbaugh, when all of a sudden people started coming over to get his—Limbaugh's—autograph. "I became security, organizing the line," says Bennett. Of Limbaugh, never short of superlatives to describe himself, Bennett says, as though he were on the show, "He is possibly our greatest living American."

Limbaugh is pursued by media of every stripe, and by conservatives eager to hitch their wagons to his rising star in an age of ostensible conservative decline.

Limbaugh is pursued by media of every stripe, and by conservatives eager to hitch their wagons to his rising star in an age of ostensible conservative decline. This fall Limbaugh invades television, with a nationally syndicated half-hour show produced by Roger Ailes; his first book, *The Way Things Ought to Be*, is due out soon from Pocket Books; a newsletter is also in the works. All these projects have temporarily taken Limbaugh off the speaking circuit, where his fee was $25,000. Nonetheless, it's expected that he'll gross more than $2 million this year, up from $500,000 in 1989 and not bad for a guy who not too long ago had trouble paying the mortgage.

Born in 1951 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Limbaugh went to work as a disc jockey for a station in his hometown at age 16, later moving on to Pittsburgh and Kansas City. Tired of spinning platters, he joined the Kansas City Royals in 1979 as director of group sales, but he couldn't stay away from the mike. By 1984 he was hosting a daytime talk show on KFBK in Sacramento. There Limbaugh developed parts of the show that since 1988 he has syndicated from New York—a show that many credit with raising AM radio from the dead.

Limbaugh's career path did not please his father, who died in 1990. Descended from a line of lawyers and Republicans (his grandfather served as Eisenhower's ambassador to India, and his uncle is a Reagan-appointed judge), Limbaugh chucked college after only one year. He did retain his father's political conservatism, however, and he remains an autodidact, confessing on air in May, for example, that, although coming to them late in life, he recently had been reading the *Federalist Papers*.

Radio is where Limbaugh can be himself—which formula, he says, is the key to his success. Being Limbaugh is something only Limbaugh can do. By his hearty voice you might suspect he shops at big men's stores, which, weighing 317 pounds, he does. There is nothing shy about his performance, as he variously describes himself as "serving humanity," being "on the cutting edge of societal evolution," "redefining greatness on the radio," and "saying more in five seconds than most talk show hosts say in a whole show." Limbaugh's mother did well by following family precedent in naming him Rush; imagine a refrigerator of a fullback stomping across the North American continent, gleefully stiff-arming every liberal in his path. Limbaugh takes some getting used to, but he says you're wrong if you think he's arrogant—he's just self-confident. Limbaugh's self-descriptions are a sort of trademark: in selling himself he's really selling his show, carving his own identity indelibly in the American mind. And it doesn't hurt that he pokes fun at himself, too.

So it is that, when the news at noon is over and 12:06 p.m. has arrived, Limbaugh begins:

> *Greetings, conversationalists across the fruited plain, this is Rush Limbaugh, the most dangerous man in America, with the largest hypothalamus in North America, serving humanity simply by opening my mouth, destined for my own wing in the Museum of Broadcasting, executing everything I do flawlessly with zero mistakes, doing this show with half my brain tied behind my back just to make it fair because I have talent on loan from . . . God. Rush Limbaugh. A man. A legend. A way of life.*

I have entered Two Penn Plaza here in Manhattan and taken the elevator high above Madison Square Garden to a floor that is home to WABC 770, where the scourge of liberals holds forth weekdays from noon to three. I wait in the small reception room, but not long. The door opens and before me appears a red-haired guy in khaki shorts and a T-shirt. My eyes are drawn to his footwear, a pair of Chuck Taylor's Converse, black low-tops. Immediately I know I am nowhere near the straight-faced solemnity of the "dominant media culture." Kit Carson, chief of (a very small) staff for the show—and whose real name *is* Kit, just as his brother's is Johnny—leads me to the control room from which I can observe the world's most dangerous man.

I see a large face framed by a headset that covers the ears as thoroughly as a pair of earmuffs. Whatever else may be happening in America, this man is having a rollicking good

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time. Whenever music rolls, he drums his fingers on the table before him, as though he were still a DJ. At eye level is the microphone, and at arm's length, on a stand, are various papers. Limbaugh pulls at this bit of paper and then that, commenting in a Midwestern accent that has a touch of Harry Caray in it on what's in the news or in the faxes that pour into his office. The voice *must* be listened to, for not only is there no telling what will be said next, there is not even any figuring how it might be said, and all the while an experienced (even for a day) listener has the expectation that a huge laugh, in which he can join, is about to break out. Throughout his commentary Limbaugh snaps his sheets of paper between his thumbs and forefingers, as loudly as he can. The sound zips through the mike: it is background music of sorts for the "Excellence in Broadcasting Network," which has one and only one show.

"I see stuff," Limbaugh later tells me, "and say 'Wow! What a good show I'm going to have today!' " He had seen some good stuff that morning, just days after Bill Clinton took on Sister Souljah. Limbaugh expresses his strong agreement with Clinton and excoriates black leaders, like Jesse Jackson, who want him to apologize. What she said "can't stand the test of reason or morality," says Limbaugh. "I'm appalled by it." Today, as always, Limbaugh does with Jesse Jackson what cannot be done in print and what would not come across so effectively on television. He refers to him as The Reverend Jackson, pausing between "The" and "Reverend," and "Reverend" and "Jackson," drawing out the first syllable of "Reverend," and pronouncing the three words in a near whisper because, as Limbaugh explains, this is a man no one dares reproach. Limbaugh draws a cartoon, in effect. The Clinton-Souljah-Jackson topic leads Limbaugh on to urban matters: he goes after Ice-T's "Cop Killer" album, deplores the rioting in Chicago that occurred the night the Bulls won their NBA Championship, and speaks his mind (as he has since late April) about the rioting in Los Angeles and the apologetic political responses to it.

Limbaugh has occasion to praise Oliver North and Dan Quayle, to laud talk shows ("You people in the dominant media culture don't understand why candidates go on talk shows. . . . This is a wonderful development"), to knock the *New York Times* for an anti-Quayle story, and to criticize Ross Perot's bid for the presidency. Every mention of Perot's name triggers a playing of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again."

Today, as on other days, there is an "Animal Rights Update" and, per usual, a few calls: one about racial hatred, another about a First Amendment case, another about Oliver North's appearance on CNBC (Limbaugh: "He's very cool, he's mastered the medium"), another from a woman who identifies herself as a "feminazi liberal" but nonetheless tells "Rush" (every caller calls him that), "I love you anyway." Limbaugh exits to commercials with "bump" music, usually rock 'n' roll. Today, at one point, Limbaugh signals his crew to use the "Cultural Bump." A while ago some Limbaugh fan wrote and sung lyrics to a Puccini tune; the operatic composition includes a description of Limbaugh as "the conservative voice of freedom heard throughout all America." It is a stitch to hear this sung, and Carson and company, who have heard it many times before, are laughing along with Limbaugh.

Thus went my day at the Excellence in Broadcasting Network. While every show begins with a bouncy bass lead-in (from "My City Was Gone" by Chrissie Hynde and the Pretenders), thereafter the show is whatever Limbaugh decides to make it. Typically, he comments on the events of the day, a job that finds him ridiculing liberals. These include the "arts-and-croissant crowd," "environmentalist wackos," the "feminazis," the "homeless advocates," and the "multiculturalists."

"This is Rush Limbaugh, the most dangerous man in America, with the largest hypothalamus in North America, serving humanity simply by opening my mouth . . . doing this show with half my brain tied behind my back to make it fair . . ."

Limbaugh also issues "updates" on various political or cultural topics, introduced with music and sound effects. The Animal Rights Update is preceded by Andy Williams singing "Born Free" with sounds of gunfire and explosions and animal screams mixed in; the Homeless Update uses "Ain't Got No Home," a tune cut in the fifties by Clarence "Frogman" Henry. Limbaugh also features "Feminist Updates," "Sexual Harassment Updates," and "Anita Hill Updates," which are variations on the same theme. (The Hill updates are introduced by the Guess Who's "She's Come Undone.") Limbaugh also has "Condom Updates," which are introduced by the Fifth Dimension's "(Would You Like to Ride in) My Beautiful Balloon?" Limbaugh takes on his liberal targets through other devices, such as mock commercials. He has several such ads for "bungee condoms"; on one, an announcer indicates that these devices are "now available in the handy 18-pack Kennedy Saturday Night Special."

Ted Kennedy is perhaps Limbaugh's favorite target. To introduce his "Ted Kennedy Update," Limbaugh has made "The Wanderer" by Dion into "The Philanderer," sung by a Ted Kennedy impersonator:

I'm the type of guy who likes to roam around,
I'm never in one place, I roam from town to town.
And when I find myself falling for some girl,
I walk right to that car of mine, I take her for a whirl,
'Cause I'm a Kennedy, yes, I'm Ted Kennedy,
I sleep around, around, around, around, around.

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Nor does Limbaugh have fun just with political figures. He routinely goes after many in Hollywood, including "enviro" Ted Danson of "Cheers" and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason of "Designing Women" (and Redesigning Bill Clinton—she produced the tape of Clinton's "life story" used at the Democratic Convention).

While the Rush Limbaugh Show includes calls from listeners, it's not caller-driven; the callers serve merely to make Limbaugh bigger (so to speak) and better to his audience. Not that they have to agree with him, but they have to be passionate or interesting enough to retain the show's nationwide audience; "The Rush Limbaugh Show," Limbaugh freely admits, is a business.

Bo Snerdley (an alias) screens the calls; it's his job to keep out the crazies and the bores—both sure-fire audience losers. On some days, only a few callers get through. For example, the plaintiff in *Lucas* v. *South Carolina Coastal Council* got on air on June 29, the very day the Supreme Court decided his property rights case in his favor. Lucas said the 7-2 ruling was a "tremendously good decision" and was pleased that the "same bunch of people" (the environmentalists Limbaugh so often rails against) had lost.

CHILDREN, TODAY WE HAVE A VERY SPECIAL GUEST! CAN ANYBODY TELL ME WHO HE IS?
HE'S A REPUBLICAN... HE'S VERY INFLUENTIAL... HE'S AN EXPERT ON POLITICS...
RUSH LIMBAUGH?!

Limbaugh treats his callers politely and with respect. Combat radio is not for him. "Many hosts are agitators," says Richard Harris, another Limbaugh listener who worked nine years for National Public Radio and is now with "Nightline." "They try to get people riled up. Limbaugh doesn't. He has the ability to get to the core of an issue without having an incendiary discussion with angry callers. You can have an honest debate with him, and you know he won't have his thumb perched on the cut-off button."

It is, of course, impossible to tell someone about "The Rush Limbaugh Show." Given the specialized vocabulary he uses—"feminazi," the "fruited plain," "General Dinkins" (the New York Mayor), "Rio Linda, California" (a dreary neighborhood near Sacramento that he employs to describe a place most people wouldn't want to be in)—Limbaugh advises that it takes six weeks of the show before a listener can "comprehend its nuances." The showman and businessman ever, Limbaugh recommends lengthy exposure to "EIB" (Excellence in Broadcasting), which he defines as "an airborne phenomenon spread by casual contact that's addictive yet harmless to the health" and for which millions of Americans have tested "positive."

As James C. Roberts wrote last year in the *American Enterprise*, the rise of talk radio is related to the emergence of information as one of the central ingredients in popular culture. Begun a half century ago in New York, talk radio was local in orientation until the late 1970s—about when Limbaugh left radio for the Royals. Satellite technology helped create national talk radio, as did deregulation of the telephone industry, in the early 1980s, which made it economical for people to call up a Limbaugh on an 800 number. With the erosion of AM radio audiences, local stations could more easily share the costs of a national show than produce their own. And, with the nation more and more wired into national issues, local audiences were "nationalized": what interested the nation interested them. Helping the rise of both local and national talk radio was one of talk radio's important differences from the prestige press and the television networks: citizens could actually talk to the big cheese.

While all this helps explain why there is a "Rush Limbaugh Show," it doesn't begin to account for its popularity. At least as important as Limbaugh's unique radio persona is the increasingly widespread dissatisfaction with the "dominant media culture," a development that is related to the huge interest in Ross Perot as a presidential candidate.

Last year the Kettering Foundation reported that more and more Americans feel they have been dislodged "from their rightful place in American democracy" not only by politicians and lobbyists but also by "people in the media." To sell himself, Perot used radio and television talk shows that by their nature allowed him to speak, unedited and unfiltered, to the people. He was outside the system, including the big media. Limbaugh also stands outside the big media, indeed against it. And because surveys routinely

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show that most of the news media, like most of Hollywood, are well to the left of the American people, Limbaugh resonates with an audience that necessarily is to the right of the media.

To be sure, Limbaugh was highly critical of Perot's candidacy. He thought it born in deceit and said the Dallas billionaire did not understand our political system. He correctly knocked Perot's electronic town hall as being at odds with the teachings of the *Federalist*. While Limbaugh, like Perot, uses a distinctly populist medium and refuses to surrender his right to speak to "learned experts," he is not one to endorse pure democracy or claim to speak for the people.

If Limbaugh had been a shoot off the liberal media stock, it's doubtful his audience would be so large. What he has done is fill a political-cultural void created by the departure of Ronald Reagan, the last figure to speak unapologetically for American conservatism. What then does he think of the argument that conservatism—to borrow a phrase from a well-known magazine editor—is cracking up?

"Bob [Tyrrell] is writing from the perspective of the conservative movement, and there are problems there," says Limbaugh. "For that matter, there may be some in the conservative movement who don't regard me as part of it. But out in the country there are lots of people who don't know about all the arguments conservative writers have but who are still basically conservative. And out there, we're winning."

Limbaugh has filled a political-cultural void created by the departure of Ronald Reagan, the last figure to speak unapologetically for American conservatism.

For years conservatives ruminated about how they might challenge what Tyrrell calls the one-party media. Buy a newspaper, a network. Suddenly if improbably, and even to Limbaugh's surprise—"I didn't have a sense of being a pioneer," he says—there is another way. The EIB.

Restaurants in cities where the show is heard have set aside "Rush Rooms," in which people who want to hear Rush while they eat lunch can do just that. Not long ago I found myself in O'Charley's, on Six Forks Road in Raleigh, North Carolina, hard by a K-Mart the length of a football stadium. O'Charley's Rush Room is in the bar area. Tennis racquets adorn the walls, along with signs for Miller and Budweiser (but why no Coors, the beer of the right?), and a schedule for the Winston Cup stock-car races. Televisions—one small, the other the size of a Volkswagen—are tuned in to ESPN. O'Charley's Express Menu (ready in ten minutes) includes hamburgers, a BLT club, and a bunch of salads.

"We get lots of suits in here," says the bartender, "and lots of blue-collars." Yesterday the place was full, but today it's just me and a couple of blue-collars. I am putting away some fish and chips while the guy on the barstool beside me eats fried chicken. "I love his show," he tells me. "He's down to earth. He says what he thinks. He speaks the truth." So says this man in a blue workshirt (and collar) who works at the nearby Exxon. His name, spelled out on a patch above his right pocket, is Adam. Adam wears a blue Exxon cap and sports a ponytail. Adam means, literally, the first man. Rush, who believes in God and in creation, should like it that I'm talking to a ponytailed Adam who fully embraces his show.

I'm told that some folks in Raleigh aren't so happy with Rush. This O'Charley's used to set aside one of its main rooms as its Rush Room. People objected and wanted O'Charley's to end it. Rush Room supporters heard about the objectors and told O'Charley's to keep it. The restaurant decided to relocate to the bar area. The person keeping track of tables tells me that about seven or eight people a day come in asking to hear Rush. I ask the nature of the objections. "That he's sexist and racist."

Par for the course for Limbaugh, those objections, and they have been expressed by such as Gloria Allred, a feminist activist who uses Hitler in discussing Limbaugh. (Although she confesses to listening to Limbaugh "in the privacy of my car"; Limbaugh should be pleased with *this* exercise of her right of privacy.)

Limbaugh's arguments, whether stated propositionally or conveyed through jokes or lyrics or mock commercials, are based upon certain conservative premises: that all human life has been created by God and is sacred; that God placed man in dominion over nature, including the animals, who do not, strictly speaking, have *rights*; that no healthy society can dispense with belief in God or the public accommodation of religious practices; that there is a moral law, grounded in religion, by which man's behavior must ultimately be judged; that there are differences in nature between men and women that are relevant to the way in which we should order at least some things—such as our military—in public life; that society should not guarantee equal outcomes but equal opportunity; that governments are instituted to protect the rights of individuals; and that individuals flourish best when government is limited and families are strong.

Limbaugh focuses on three causes in particular—environmentalism, animal rights activism, and feminism—because he believes that underlying all three are anti-capitalism, secular humanism, and socialism. He does make distinctions: for example, the environmentalist wackos, whom he excoriates are not to be confused with serious "ecology-minded people," whom he applauds. But Limbaugh paints with a broad brush, and his targets are in ready supply: all those who seek to eliminate natural differences between man and nature, be-

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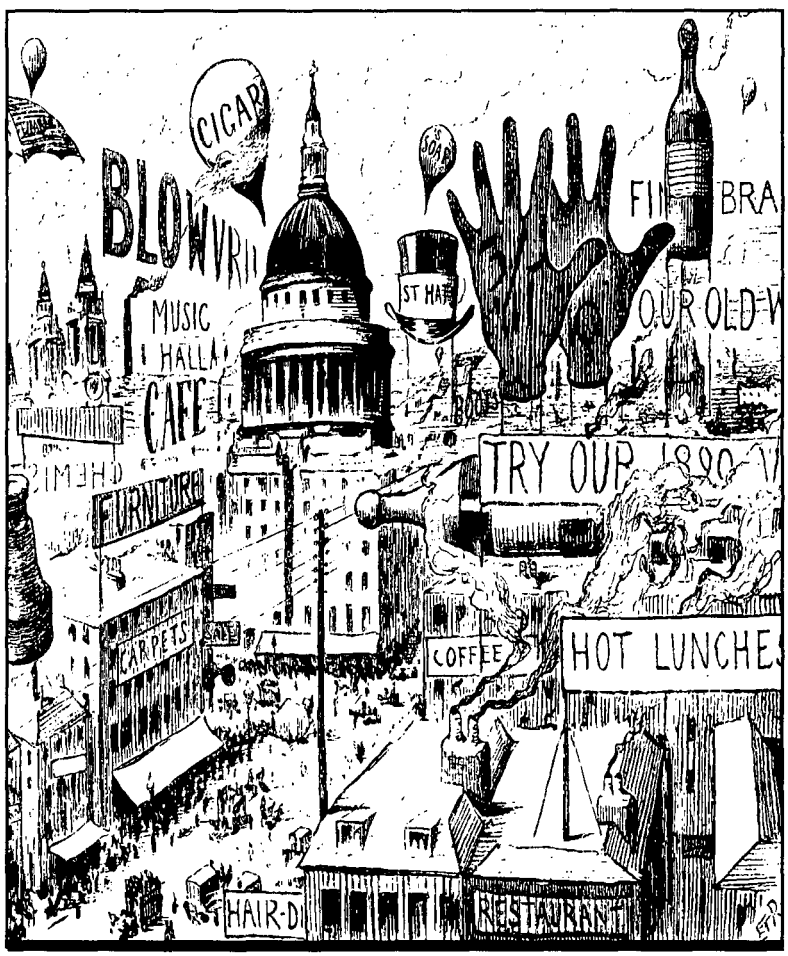
tween men and women, and even between man and God.

Limbaugh may seem an unlikely conservative warrior. Twice divorced with no children, he is now single, and though he believes in God, he does not go to church. But Limbaugh disdains the "lifestyle liberalism" of many in the media (and Hollywood and politics), who live on the basis of the proposition that there is no higher authority than the individual, no higher end for man (which is to say for the human person) than his constant self-creation. Limbaugh has come to his cultural conservatism not through intellection but naturally, having been formed by a Missouri culture much sterner than what prevails in many places today. It's no wonder that Limbaugh has gone to bat repeatedly on behalf of Dan Quayle in his war against Murphy Brown and others, even suspending his no-guests-in-the-studio rule to allow Quayle to share his microphone for half an hour one afternoon in July.



Limbaugh battles the absurd by *being* absurd, as he puts it. Because he thinks it absurd that public schools now distribute condoms, Limbaugh produces his mock commercials about "bungee condoms." He thus does not avoid the word "condoms," as might those cultural conservatives who are put off by Limbaugh's occasional crudity and not always PG language. Limbaugh opposes the excrescences of modernity by being excrescently modern—another irony.

What Limbaugh's impact upon the nation will be is unclear. Limbaugh believes liberalism is dying. I'm not so sure. Some of the more extreme aspects of *political* liberalism have died. But cultural liberalism has deep roots in ideologies dating from the last century, is difficult to address through most of the ordinary instruments of our politics, and will need exposure to something much stronger than EIB if it is to be constrained. And bear in mind James Q. Wilson's observation (made in his seminal 1980 *Commentary* piece, "Reagan and the Republican Revival") that in periods of broad cultural change, such as we have been witnessing since the 1960s, "the forces of tradition have ultimately lost." The battle over the nation's future will continue to take place in the classroom, from kindergarten through graduate school, and conservatives have yet to mount an effective takeover of a major university. Still, Limbaugh has become a major point of resistance to liberalism in the popular culture, and the ultimate effect of his daily cartooning may be to delegitimize for a huge segment of Americans those whom the dominant media have lionized. Whether this subversive work will lead to a more sensible national discourse is an open question.

Limbaugh could have an impact on elections. Conservatives are down to about 170 reasons why George Bush should be re-elected, the same 170 reasons why Bill Clinton should not be; those 170 reasons are the judges the next President will have the chance to name. This is why Limbaugh, whose cultural conservatism has made him especially attentive to the role of the judiciary, will probably support Bush (so long as it is Bush-Quayle).

Might the card-carrying Republican eventually cross over into politics? Limbaugh says he's not interested in becoming a politician, that he knows and respects the enormous difference between politics and talk radio. Harder to accept is his contention that he does not seek political influence. "I have no cause, no political agenda," he says. "I just want to be the best radio guy I can be. If I succeed, it will be because I do a good show." But his show will not be a good show unless Limbaugh is being himself, and that means he will be talking politics, and who ever seriously talked about politics without hoping to win the argument?

Perhaps Limbaugh's most important impact will be on his fellow conservatives. Evans and Novak reported in May that "a longtime Bush backer" had advised the President that "to save himself" this election year, he would do well "to imitate the style of Rush Limbaugh." It's not so much that Bush and others should emulate Limbaugh's style as partake of his hearty optimism. There's nothing wrong with being right at least 97.9 percent of the time. ❐

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Erich Eichman

Fox on the Run

The martyrdom of Stephen "Studs" Chao.

One has to feel sympathy for Stephen Chao, the 36-year-old president of Fox Television who was fired by Rupert Murdoch after displaying "tremendous misjudgment" at a management conference in Snowmass, Colorado, in late June. For didactic purposes, Chao asked a man to disrobe and stand onstage beside him for about thirty seconds, while Chao spoke on the dangers of censorship to an auditorium filled with senior executives and distinguished guests.

On hand were over a hundred corporate officers from Murdoch's media conglomerate, News Corporation, and its many branches, including Sky Broadcasting, the British satellite-delivered television service; and Fox Inc., which includes both Twentieth Century Fox and the Fox television network. More important to the collapse of Chao's career was the presence of Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and his wife Lynne, who is chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Also in the audience were editors from the *Boston Herald*, the London *Times*, and HarperCollins (all Murdoch properties)—and, of course, Murdoch himself.

Erich Eichman is former managing editor of the New Criterion.

To orchestrate a public display of male nudity before such a group, even by way of illustrating a point, was indeed a gross miscalculation. Chao's sin, however, was not a lapse in taste but an insistence on its continuity. He merely displayed in real life the vulgarity that the Fox network displays almost every night on millions of television screens across America.

Chao is said to have been shocked at his dismissal, and one can hardly blame him. By normal standards, of course, his male-stripper gimmick was a crude theatrical gesture, a violation of decency and decorum, an embarrassing display. But we must remember that the Snowmass conference was a gathering of entertainment and media executives, men and women whose rise to the highest echelons of Murdoch's empire has not always been guided, it is safe to say, by a strict adherence to principles of gentility, intellectual rigor, and aesthetic refinement. More to the point, Chao was the brightest star in that part of the Murdoch galaxy illuminated by Fox Television's unique brand of mass entertainment.

In its five years of existence, the Fox network has earned the dubious distinction of having brought television's already abysmal content to new lows, mostly by trading in coarse jokes, risqué humor, sexual innuendo, and sensational news events. It is reported that Murdoch had recently

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promoted Chao to the presidency of Fox Television and Fox News precisely because Chao was so good at developing hit shows of the Fox type. His most notorious hit is "Studs," a late-night panel discussion in which youthful participants detail the sexual content of arranged dates, in language that can only be described as ludicrously euphemistic.

Chao was done in by a panel discussion of a very different sort, staged for a highly unusual management conference. Murdoch had brought his News Corp. executives to Snowmass, in part, to hear serious talks on major cultural and political questions. The day before Chao's famous prank—Thursday, June 18—the topics were fairly tame: the challenges facing multinational corporations, and the future of newspaper readership and mass advertising. The really big issue-pondering began the next day.

Friday morning's first session, devoted to "Geopolitics in the 1990s," was the event for which Secretary Cheney had come to Snowmass. He was joined on the podium by Michael Cook, the Australian ambassador to the United States; Sir Charles Powell, Margaret Thatcher's former private secretary; and William Rees-Mogg, for many years the editor of the London *Times*. Secretary Cheney argued, as one might expect, for maintaining a strong defense despite the Cold War's end. Powell predicted that Europe would be less centralized than the Maastricht Treaty now suggests. And Lord Rees-Mogg argued that the amazing postwar economic boom—whereby what we think of as middle-class comfort has come to the majority of citizens—would spread to the non-Western world by way of India and China.

It is probably correct to say that, with such musings, News Corp.'s executives were enjoying a level of dialogue slightly more elevated than the nightly date-chat on "Studs." (Samantha: "He's got a butt like a toaster just ready to pop.") And the panel's concerns were on the whole more serious than those taken up each evening on "A Current Affair," Fox's tabloid show ("Confessions of a Schoolgirl Hooker").

With Friday's second session, the entertainment world of which "Studs" is a part at last came into view. As we have read many times by now, the subject of the panel was "the threat to democratic capitalism posed by popular culture." In addition to Chao, the participants included Mrs. Cheney; John O'Sullivan, editor of *National Review*; Irving Kristol, co-editor of the *Public Interest*; and Michael Medved, co-host of "Sneak Previews," a syndicated television show produced by a PBS station in Chicago.

Given the assigned topic, there was surely something hazardous about the juxtaposition of these formidable thinkers and their audience. After all, the Fox branch of News Corp. earns Murdoch and his shareholders a profit by producing movies and television shows whose content is at odds with nearly every moral, intellectual, and aesthetic tenet that Kristol and his colleagues hold dear. Of the people scheduled to appear onstage, Chao was the only participant whose sensibility matched those of the media higher-ups on the other side of the podium. He was rumored beforehand to be nervous, feeling himself outgunned—the sole defender of "the industry" in a crowd of intellectuals who were not likely to feel any great affinity for "Studs." As it turned out, a little nervousness on Chao's part was not out of place. Would that it had inspired a little restraint.

Although we know what was *seen* at Friday's second session, we have until now known little about what was said. Luckily, a few attendees were willing to reconstruct the event after the fact.

Lynne Cheney, who served as moderator, began the session by acknowledging the terrible state of popular culture. Along the way she cited Sister Souljah's remarks on racial murder. She then introduced Irving Kristol, whose speech did not fail to provoke. Kristol argued that censorship, which had been an effective guide to public morals in this country until fairly recently, was not necessarily a bad thing, especially when exercised at the local level. He implied that various aspects of popular culture—like the use of dirty words—are rightly worth restricting, for they threaten the most basic desire of any parent: to form the values of his children. In too many households, Kristol suggested, popular culture (especially television) has usurped this value-forming role. He recalled his own experience of seeing a television in operation for the very first time, years ago, when it was still a novelty. He felt delight and fascination—until he saw his first commercial. He then found himself thinking, slightly appalled: "They are selling things to my children!"

Chao's sin was not a lapse in taste but an insistence on its continuity. He merely displayed in real life the vulgarity that the Fox network displays almost every night on millions of television screens across America.

Michael Medved took up Kristol's phrase to affirm that what popular culture sells is always, at some level, values as well as goods, there being no such thing as value-free viewing. Anticipating the counter-argument that popular culture is mere entertainment—that it has no effect on the character of the public that consumes it—Medved pointed out that the basis of both television advertising and movie "product placement" contracts is precisely that these media do have a measurable—and billable—effect on their audiences. He challenged as well the argument that popular entertainments only mirror society, without shaping it. The real world, he maintained, is not nearly the ubiquitously violent and dysfunctional place we see in the movies. And since the market in no way justifies the distortion—R-rated movies, although

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more numerous, do less well at the box office than those rated PG—some other explanation must be found for Hollywood's relentlessly vile depictions of life.

Neither Medved nor John O'Sullivan—who had earlier lamented the liberal bias in network news and confirmed popular culture's tendency to undermine conventional moral assumptions—endorsed censorship as Kristol had. O'Sullivan had expressed his concern that censorship, besides being impracticable, could be rigged to enforce a politically correct view of life. He argued that private barriers and voluntary arrangements—like movie-rating codes and CD warning labels—were a better way of limiting noxious content. In any case, he added, the mere criticism of cultural content on moral grounds should not be confused with censorship and condemned thereby. Indeed, moral criticism is an essential part of a healthy cultural life.

Although O'Sullivan granted to popular culture a certain vitality and technical prowess, neither he nor Medved sought to defend it on its own terms. That task was left to Chao, who spoke last, reading (unlike the others) from a prepared text.

Let it be said that Chao's presentation was not entirely ridiculous; only partly so. He blended his vaudeville with argument as only a television executive with a Harvard degree in classics could. The burden of his speech was that television's content is shaped by a constant push-and-pull among producers, advertisers, and pressure groups. The net effect of all this activity, he maintained, was a *de facto* censorship, and he offered several examples. Although Murphy Brown might have a baby out of wedlock, he argued, she would never have an abortion. Similarly, although homosexuals may appear on television as noble victims, no situation comedy would ever be built around, say, the lives of two eccentric bachelors uninterested in the opposite sex. Even a show like "Cops," featuring real-life crime stories, must micromanage its presentation of criminals to avoid forbidden zones. Thus, Chao said, no white-collar criminals "of the Hebraic persuasion" appear on the show, while Asians are over- and blacks under-represented.

Chao's idea seemed to be that there isn't an all-powerful elite that operates in a vacuum, dictating television's content. Rather, network programmers operate in a vortex of contending forces. What is more, these forces tacitly compel a hypocritical standard. He asked (rhetorically) how many members of the audience had smoked marijuana, or committed adultery—assuming, cynically perhaps, that in this day and age nearly everyone had. To drive home the point that, despite such loose living, a production code still operates in Hollywood, he punctuated his examples of undue restrictiveness by directing attention to a banner hoisted over the stage. "What time is it?" he would ask, and then answer: "It's 1992!" The banner, as you might guess, announced a general heading for the conference that included, alas, the year in which it was taking place.

The last censoring restriction Chao put into evidence was the one that effectively banned nudity on network television. Fatally, he began to talk about the Dutch, who confronted their own dispute about nudity on television by showing a naked woman for a whole day, hoping to defuse the prurient power of the image by offering so much of it. As he spoke, an artist's model whom Chao had hired for the occasion—a man named Marco Iacovelli—made his way to the stage and began to undress, within spitting distance of Murdoch and his wife, Anna, and the Secretary of Defense.

To everyone's amazement, Iacovelli didn't stop once he got started. At first, a few people shouted for him to get off the stage, thinking he was trying to disrupt the proceedings; they soon understood that he was a planned part of them. Nervous laughter gave way to stunned silence. For what it's worth, Chao had earlier asked Iacovelli to "simply undress as you would be doing at the end of the day." No striptease, strictly speaking, was thereby intended. When Chao had finished making his point, Iacovelli put his clothes back on, shirt first, and left.

Chao wrapped up his speech by urging that—since it is, after all, "1992!"—everyone should try to adjust to new realities. As to censorship, it would be far better (he argued) if networks were left alone to entertain as they saw fit. People are free, he added, to turn off the television set if what they see is not to their liking. The Snowmass audience, it should be noted, had been denied such a choice.

One would expect there to have been some reaction to Chao's nude surprise in the half-hour question-and-answer period that followed, but there was, well, barely a mention of it. Responding to a person in the audience who had compared his cultural ideas to those of Savonarola, Medved was moved to say that he was glad his young daughters had not been in the audience for Chao's presentation, a comment that elicited applause. And an editor from *News of the World*, a woman, asked for Iacovelli's phone number. But otherwise the audience's remarks were devoted to expressing outrage at Kristol's "chilling" ideas about censorship and at Medved's emotional indictment of Hollywood's depiction of American life.

For, of course, the pre-Chao presentations had not all gone down well. The Hollywood clique in particular had made no secret of its irritation and displeasure. Various audience members had giggled, moaned, whispered ("Get the hook!"), and otherwise conveyed their visceral distaste for what was being said onstage by the conservative critics of their industry. Murdoch, it turned out, was to feel a similar distaste, but it would be directed at Stephen Chao.

Reports conflict about whether Murdoch fired Chao immediately as the session broke up or huddled with advisors first and then fired him. (*Newsweek* reported that Murdoch "ruminated for four hours" that afternoon "with colleagues" at his Aspen ski lodge.) In any case, Chao did not attend the luncheon after Friday's now-famous second session. Murdoch did, of course, as did Secretary Cheney. They appeared to be in good spirits.

According to Liz Smith, who cites the *San Francisco Examiner*'s follow-up report on the conference, Chao's perfor-

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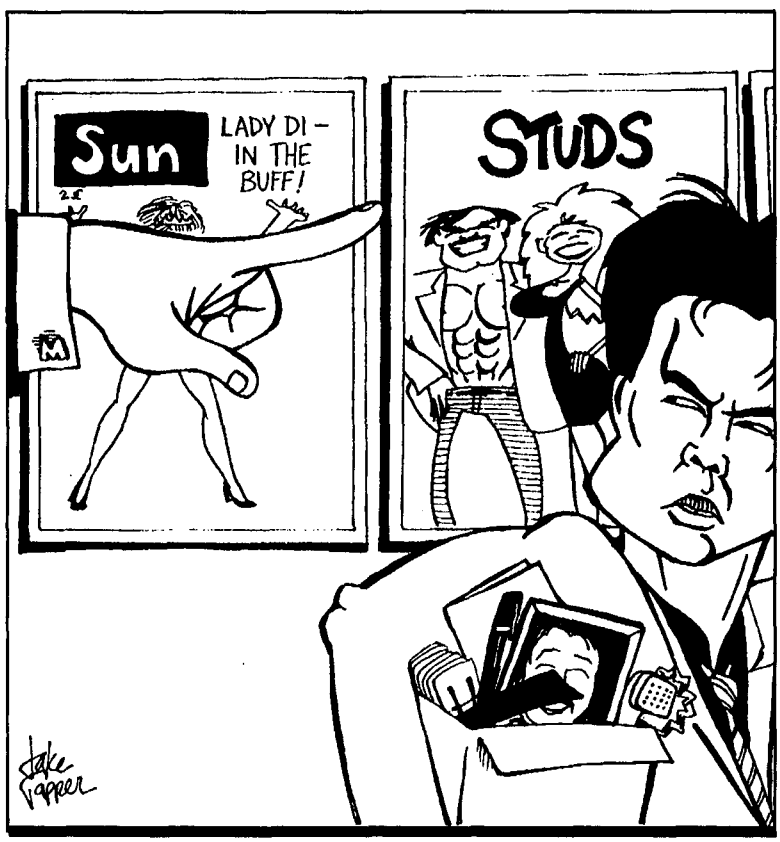
mance was only half as dramatic as it was originally planned to be. His first idea was to "have another man come out with a gun and shoot the naked man with a blank, whereupon fake blood would flow." The point of this exercise would have been to confront the audience with examples of nudity and violence and then to ask which violation of decency was worse. One supposes that nudity's relative innocence was to be proved indisputably. In the event, the presence of Secretary Cheney's armed bodyguards led Chao to think better of the idea. But even unexecuted, the plan demonstrates the kind of crude popular-culture mentality that Chao brought to his assignment.

On the last day of the conference, when everyone had quite recovered (including Iacovelli, who could be seen serving coffee), yet another panel discussion took place, this time devoted to "The Technology of Mass Communications." It was conducted with a decorous seriousness that stood in dramatic contrast to Chao's corporate theater. It featured the author George Gilder, who in a recent book declares the death of broadcast television as we know it and predicts a revolutionary role for interactive TV. In his speech (as in his book), Gilder described a future world in which the individual—freed from the passive, dead-end television terminal he is now constrained to use—will be newly empowered to collect data, select programs, and transmit the products of his own effort. In passing, Gilder mentioned that his 13-year-old daughter had been in the audience for Friday's session. His tone did not suggest approval of what she had been forced to see.



The conference closed with several brief speeches. Joe Roth, the head of Fox's movie division, heatedly defended R-rated films against Medved's attack the previous day. Irwin Stelzer, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the man responsible for putting together much of the conference's intellectual agenda, apologized for the panel's lack of balance, explaining that he had tried to get other people to join Chao's side of the popular-culture debate but that no one had been willing. Then Murdoch offered a summary of his own, in which he too reassured the gathering that there had been no attempt to gang up on Chao. Famously, he expressed regret at having had to "terminate his best lieutenant." (The allusion is to Cassio in *Othello*.) But, he added: "There's one thing this company must make clear—that there are limits."

One can be forgiven for wondering, along with a bewildered and jobless Stephen Chao, just where these limits are drawn. Murdoch is considered a staunch conservative by many people—and indeed the conference's panel discussions, both weighty and controversial, would not have been possible without his concern for serious debate and his sensitivity to conservative doubts about popular culture. But he is also the publisher of one of London's most notorious tabloids, the *Sun*, in which nudity is a daily feature. He is the former owner of the *Village Voice*, whose photo archives could easily include a bulging file labeled "nudity, male." The current issue of *Mirabella*, the most glamorous of Murdoch's magazine properties, features a roundtable discussion among several real-life women about their sex lives. A conscientious reader will learn more than she ever wanted to know about one-night stands and penile secretions, and will hear it said that women must perform "fellatio more obliquely" these days. More relevantly, as president of the News Corporation, Fox's parent company, Murdoch is as much the parent of "Studs" as Chao. In 1988 he borrowed three *billion* dollars to buy the magazine (*TV Guide*) that tells the world definitively when it may see "Studs"—and every other trashy program now making a home for itself in television's vast cultural wasteland.

In short, it is difficult to see how Murdoch can claim the moral high ground in this affair. Surely Chao was operating well within the boundaries of a corporate culture that includes, alongside its prestige properties, such publications as *News of the World*. The July 5 issue of that tabloid features a story with the title: "I'M THE STRIPPENDALE! BEEFCAKE JOEY BARES ALL." The lead reads: "Here's the sight you girls have all been waiting for . . . a Chippendale *without* his posing pouch!" A large, oily nude photo appears nearby, on which a small, strategically placed Chippendale bow tie has been drawn with the word CENSORED inscribed across it.

Perhaps, as *Time* magazine observed in its story on the Chao episode, "It's not what you do, it's where you do it." In any case, one needn't cite Murdoch's sleazier media proper-

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ties to find a double standard. The London *Sunday Times*, for instance, has been excerpting from the recent gossip book about Princess Diana. And a harbinger of Iacovelli's offending performance appeared at Snowmass the night before—at the advance screening of a typical product from Fox's movie division. The film, entitled *Night and the City*, starred Robert De Niro (as a failed boxing promoter) and Jessica Lange. We will have to await the movie's general release to judge whether it achieves the level of artistic seriousness it apparently aspires to. Suffice to say that the movie featured the F-word so many times that Anna Murdoch was visibly upset. One cannot fault her. But the question remains: By what standard—except a double one—do you help to create an offensive thing and then condemn someone who embodies the corporate culture out of which it came?

Before we heap too much blame on Murdoch, we should perhaps give him his due. For there is no doubt that the huge mass entertainment machines of modern American life—of which Fox is a conspicuous example—bring a great deal of pleasure to a great many people. Since life can be a fairly loathsome affair, it is hard to fault Murdoch or anyone else for purveying pleasure, or to begrudge him the profits of doing so. Billions of dollars of capital would not go to the making of television shows, movies, and video cassettes if millions of people did not want them, nor would we live amidst so much marketing clutter (posters, print ads, celebrity profiles, talk shows, etc.) if it did not all have the effect of bringing the consumer willingly to the satisfaction of his desire.

But not all pleasures or desires are the same, and some of the entertainments that Murdoch and his colleagues produce—not excluding Fox's movies and television shows—are of a very low kind. They appeal, in short, to base instincts and crude emotions, and to the mind hardly at all. It is precisely the effortless, mindless, ignoble pleasure of popular entertainments that makes them so seductive. When such entertainments are consumed in the megadoses to which we are accustomed—and the shallower the pleasure, the greater the dosage required—they are bound to have a coarsening effect. They are bound to blunt the finer feelings, limit the capacity for aesthetic discrimination and critical judgment, weaken the intellect's grasp of important things, and drain away the truth-seeking vitality by which one engages the more profound aspects of life, replacing it with a ravenous, pleasure-hungry stupidity. Stephen "Studs" Chao is perhaps an especially ridiculous example of the kind of creature this deadeningly shallow entertainment culture can produce. American classrooms, it appears, are collecting pools for younger versions of him.

But there are dangers beyond a wounded sensibility. Fox Television and its competitors in the entertainment industry lend support to Daniel Bell's belief, articulated at length in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, that producing and consuming in modern life can result in "a hedonism that undercut[s] the very Protestant ethic which was the initial motivation or legitimation for individuals in bourgeois society." In this formulation, the pursuit of pleasure (hedonism) is not merely ignoble, coarse, and intellectually vacant; it promotes an idea of life that stands in opposition to an ethical code, a code that demands (among other things) hard work, thrift, discipline, and self-denial. By extension we may affirm what Friday's panelists maintained: that mass entertainment—whose whole reason for being is to facilitate pleasure—implies a definable set of values even at its mindless extreme (Fox). It is one of the ironies of the entire Snowmass affair that these are probably not the values Murdoch himself lives by. For one thing, he works very hard. His schedule surely does not permit him a leisurely half-hour at night for the viewing of "Studs." Nor is he likely to conduct his social life according to its predatory standards, nor is he likely to hope his children do.

What may we conclude from this paradox? For one thing, that the pursuit of profit, even when conducted by people whose own values are traditional, may result in the promotion of values that are decidedly untraditional, values that are sometimes coarsening and unhealthy, and sometimes explicitly destructive of ethical conduct. So it is that Time-Warner executives who do not themselves believe in "cop-killing" are happy to make money off those who do. Even if the implicit message of Fox Television is less dangerous than that of Time-Warner's pop star Ice-T, it is only slightly less condemnable.

At Snowmass, Chao found himself caught in a kind of no-man's-land between the two halves of this paradox and shot himself in the foot. (But then, "reputation [is] oft got without merit and lost without deserving," as Iago said.) In particular, Chao failed to realize that the crude sensibility that governs his former network's shows—shows that are sent out to millions of people every week, including lots of children—would be frowned upon by senior management as soon as it led to tasteless conduct in real life. He failed to see that the outrageousness for which he had been rewarded with spectacular corporate and commercial success would shock and dismay as soon as it moved from the family's living room to an auditorium filled with real people, including dignitaries, gathered to address the great issues of the day. Finally, he assumed that the president of a company that sells sleazy entertainment would be neither embarrassed nor offended by public nudity. What a fool.

Probably without intending to, Chao drew the same straight line between popular entertainment and everyday life that Vice President Quayle drew when he pointed out what a bad example "Murphy Brown" was to single women. Quayle suffered ridicule for failing to recognize the supposedly crucial distinction between real life and television. Chao lost his job for the same reason. It is true that Chao acted with an amazing combination of arrogance, naïveté, and vulgar eccentricity. But his real crime was violating the code of hypocrisy that underlay Murdoch's attempts at highmindedness. One hopes that Murdoch felt at least an uneasy awareness of his own divided impulses. If, as some have suggested, he was bravely attempting to send a message to his management corps, let us hope they were listening. ❐

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Edward Norden

South-Central Korea: Post-Riot L.A.

A traumatized American community rebuilds—and rethinks.

Looking at the man, you wouldn't expect Roy Kim to show prolonged courage in a dicey situation. That's a mistake, because it has always required tremendous sustained courage for anyone to operate a business day-in, day-out in the tougher neighborhoods of L.A. Exactly twenty-five Korean-American shopkeepers in these neighborhoods were blasted away in the twenty-six months preceding the riots. Kim's business is in the toughest neighborhood of all, South-Central. Small physically, he's a tough customer, though he lacks that hardness around the eyes and mouth that implies guts in all kinds of physical specimens.

Which isn't to say that his liquor-and-sundries store went untouched. As Kim recalled one recent morning in poor English, there was nothing he could do when the looters showed up in force soon after the Rodney King verdict. He could only watch them raid the shelves. But he was determined not to be torched, so when it became clear that the police were going to stay out of it, he got a rifle and kept the individuals with the firebombs away for 72 hours until the National Guard arrived. While most of his competitors and fellow Korean-Americans in the area have nothing to return to except ashes, he is back in business with a new inventory.

Kim's story before the verdict was the usual one for KAs who had set up in South-Central. He stepped off the plane with $100 in his pocket, and by mobilizing his family, joining a *kye*, and working fifteen-hour days for fifteen years, put enough aside to buy a mortgaged house in the suburbs. No less typical was the trouble he had with shop-lifters and gang kids who threatened to do him in if he didn't show them more respect. Trouble went with the territory, and though it made him wonder about his adopted country, he never dreamed that for several days and nights the authorities would ever let pure chaos reign. Now he's wiser, and doing great business. As he spoke—and as his wife, his cousin, and two employees, one Mexican and one black, did various chores—some of the local jobless shambled in with their welfare money and bought fortified wine in brown paper bags to party with on and around a broken sofa in the parking lot.

A few miles and light years away, on the twenty-eighth floor of the sleek Arco building downtown, Tong Soo Chung says that, for him as well, the police disappearing act was an eye-opener. T.S., as his Anglo friends call him, ar-

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rived in this country as a teenager in 1972 with less English than Roy Kim has today. His trajectory upward has been unusually steep, even for a Korean-American—Hollywood High, Andover, B.A. from Harvard, M.A. from Princeton, law degree from UCLA, a third-place finish in a Democratic primary for state assembly. It was T.S.'s belief that he had come to know America tolerably well. But though he had heard of the events in Watts long ago, and though the LAPD had always left something to be desired, he never imagined this. Which is to say, he might have imagined the powers-that-be letting the gangbangers run wild in their own turf in South-Central, but not letting them invade Koreatown itself. That's what stunned KAs, from T.S. on down. Few still hope, as he does, for an apology from the black clerics and politicos who failed to curb their tortured community's fatherless boys. But many continue to believe in a conspiracy to hit Korean places all over town and a high-level decision to throw Koreatown to the wolves.

We'll return to T.S. in his blinding white shirt and power suspenders later. First, some ethnic history and urban geography. Only the poorest, bravest, and—as it turned out—unluckiest KAs did business in South-Central. Most set up north of Pico Boulevard between downtown and the Jewish Westside, reviving a slummy neighborhood with thousands of new enterprises in the last couple of decades. This is Koreatown, complete with Korean newspapers, radio stations, hotels, restaurants, pharmacies, churches, travel agencies, and bars where young hostesses lead middle-aged men in singing along to videotapes in Korean.

Every third enterprise seems to be owned by a Kim. The L.A. phone book lists six pages of Kims, Kim meaning "gold" in Korean and being the equivalent of Jones. Almost 800,000 Koreans have moved to the U.S. since Congress wrote new, non-racist immigration laws in 1965. A quarter have settled in Southern California. But if no KA makes his home in South-Central, neither is Koreatown exclusively Korean. As soon as they can, the newcomers yank their kids out of the inner city and its lousy schools and buy into the suburban dream, commuting from Cerritos, Garden Grove, Downey. On the stoops of Koreatown's side streets you therefore hear mostly Spanish. Both here and in South-Central, in other words, the Korean-American plays the traditional Jewish role of man-in-the-middle, the custom-made scapegoat, the merchant on his own in a neighborhood where the big chains and the banks fear to tread, setting his own prices and squirreling away the profit to pay his children's way through college. His customers, whether on welfare or working their butts off, are always liable to believe that he is gouging them.

It was the Spanish-speaking poor who looted the strip mall at Western and 9th in Koreatown. "WHERE WAS THE POLICE?" asks the banner over a shop not yet reopened. You see individual sites burned to a crisp along Olympic, along Vermont, but not entire blocks eviscerated Beirut-style, as in South-Central. Many Koreatown stores and entire malls went untouched, either because the mob didn't get around to them or because the owners and the paramilitary units organized in a matter of hours drove them away with gunfire. Doubtless the most impressive locale is the pristine marble, glass, and steel Koreatown Plaza on three levels with atrium, noodle shops, electronics, Italian fashions, a serious Korean-language bookstore, and nary a round-eye anywhere. What was it Roy Kim said when asked what the mob's motives were? "Jealous." To walk around Koreatown and see what a bunch of immigrants have been able to do in the land of opportunity in less than two decades—most of the KAs came after 1975—had one Anglo reporter shaking his head with admiration. The emotion kindled by these sights in the heart of a black American is liable to be a different one.

It's rare for Korean immigrants to go on the dole, even in the beginning. For these people it was shameful to have to prove, in triplicate, not only that the livelihoods they had created had been destroyed, but that they had no savings, no insurance, and no close relatives working.

But admiration is the only possible reaction to the way the KAs organized and tried to save their property and livelihoods. Within hours of realizing that they were on their own, a group met at the South Korean consulate on Wilshire to form a kind of militia. This included men who had been army officers in the Old Country, and boys in Dodgers caps. Some units were sent to reinforce important malls while others deployed for rapid response—their communications net was cellular phones and the switchboard and announcers of Radio Korea, 1580 on the AM dial, which turned its studio into a war room for the duration. Such an instant defense force probably couldn't have been whistled up if the KAs hadn't already put an infrastructure of crime watchers in place to deal with constant muggings and break-ins over the years. The difference now was that all hell had suddenly broken loose, and in response, the vets and some of the boys were armed.

In a way, it was the community's finest hour. The embittered T.S. Chung himself, who can be pretty hard on his people, draws solace from the way they behaved, even though the only KA fatality was a boy mistaken for a looter by the militia. Without the men on the roofs with guns, the devastation of property would have been greater, and perhaps more important, so would the spiritual devastation. To say quite truthfully that it could have been worse, however, should not be to minimize what actually occurred—1,867

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KA-owned businesses around L.A. were looted and/or torched, about $350 million worth of KA-owned real estate and goods transformed into rubble or gleefully carted away.

Since the liquor stores, flea markets, gas stations, and dry cleaners in South-Central were beyond the reach of the militia, and closer to the red-hot epicenter of the chaos, virtually none escaped destruction, earning their owners membership in the Association of Korean-American Victims of the L.A. Riot. At the headquarters of this new association, located between the Radio Korea building and the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, you can slice the anger with a knife. KAs typically are Protestants, and maybe fatalism lapses when you trade Confucianism in for Western philosophy and Seoul for the City of Angels.

The Anglo bureaucrats from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and KA volunteers with American educations, were helping these angry, humiliated folk with the paperwork of food stamps, welfare, low-interest loans. It's rare for Korean immigrants to go on the dole, even in the beginning. For these people it was shameful to have to prove, in triplicate, not only that the livelihoods they had created had been destroyed, but that they had no savings, no insurance, and no close relatives working. The long-term loans at 4 percent that Congress swiftly authorized for reconstruction weren't appreciated either. Burned-out merchants like the beefy Jin Lee didn't understand why they should have to go into debt, begin from scratch again, when their distress was the government's fault. The government had failed to enforce the social contract. It had let the blacks and Latinos stew in the inner city for years, then let them run amok. It owed the victims not a loan but compensation.

Lee, 27, a decade in America and speaking in a black American accent, says that if he were a black kid, he would have looted and burned, too—an unexpected claim from a man who had his own liquor-and-sundries store totaled and whose extended family lost six of its eight businesses. He doesn't blame the kids so much as the sanctimonious, so-called moderate black adult *condottieri* with their pipelines to City Hall who in his opinion encouraged the blow-out. Like T.S. Chung, he wants apologies. Yet even more emotionally than he blames the black ministers, he blames the police and "Beverly Hills," by which he means the richest whites in town, who according to him pull the strings. It was "Beverly Hills" that decided Koreatown would take the brunt while richer neighborhoods got shielded. "Beverly Hills" ought to watch out—the KAs now are armed and disillusioned, and they have their own morons who, if there is a next time, may turn on the Anglos. Though he may have been trying to stand the short hairs on a reporter's neck on end, Lee wasn't the only KA at least as mad at the whites as at the blacks.

Of course, none of the cops at the local station will admit that the LAPD failed, much less was ordered by Chief Daryl Gates to withdraw and let the KAs be ravaged. Detective Lieutenant Paul Kim, a KA with seventeen years on the job, scoffs at such ideas. Koreatown happens to border South-Central—no conspiracy there. And if it seemed that the police retreated, Kim explains that this was because so much exploded so fast in so many places at once, stretching an undermanned, underequipped force way past its limits.

Kim finds himself in a delicate situation. He must juggle dual loyalties and repeatedly emphasizes that he speaks only for himself. On the one hand, he dismisses the idea that any neighborhood was abandoned. On the other hand, he calls the KAs an "insular" community that perhaps suffered from "a lack of communications [with] the authorities" when the sky fell. On the one hand, Kim is proud of the way the militia rose to the occasion. On the other, he's worried about the weapons out there and that people may now count more on themselves than on the legally constituted authorities responsible for protecting them.

Post-riot gun sales in Koreatown have been brisk. And why not? Some 1,100 guns are said to have been looted around L.A. by gang members during the riots, or if you will the rebellion. This intelligence, along with a knowledge of certain rap lyrics, makes an eight-hour ride-along in an LAPD black-and-white not exactly a relaxing ex-

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perience. You hope that no one will open up on a harmless reporter, and you feel for the cops who put their lives on the line while knowing that even fewer people now fear them than like them. We're talking, at the Wilshire station, about a force commanded by a barrel-chested white male, but composed in the main of black, Latino, and Asian men and women. A night shift, before hitting the street, hears a lecture on sexual harassment, a report on a building where gangbangers have stocked arms, and a few words from a lethal-looking white assistant D.A. on how to conduct a search the judge won't throw out. The D.A. appears to be the most dangerous person in the room—the others could be social workers in uniform, nice guys and gals whose laid-back demeanor and bright patter hint at a serious morale problem.

A couple of hours on patrol with the white Sergeant Natale. There are alleyways in South-Central, their claustrophobic walls busy with gang markings, that make you think of the Gaza Strip. A child-abuse report over the radio net is followed by a possible shooting over the radio net, but the only call the sergeant has to answer turns out to involve a very nice black lady deep in one of the graffiti neighborhoods who has had her compact Japanese car lifted onto cement blocks and all the wheels swiped. The woman is assured she won't get a parking ticket.

Natale shakes his head. He resides in Orange County, the round trip is three hours, it's worth it to shelter his kids. Almost everybody in the station commutes. His specialty: narcotics. Most drivers under the influence of drugs, he says, drive too slow. Natale echoes Kim's defense of the LAPD's performance in the riots and freely acknowledges that morale is shot. The public, or rather a vociferous, unrepresentative minority, wants the impossible—get the bad guys, but be gentle. Proposition F, the referendum trimming the independence of the police, passed because the Silent Majority didn't vote. What's a cop to do? As a result of Rodney King and Proposition F, if a suspect apprehended in a high-speed, adrenaline-pumping chase refuses to assume the position, you're now expected, if you value your career, to lay off the stick and the choke-hold and swarm him with your bare hands.

Maybe the new chief, Willie Williams, will improve the climate, Natale says, the implication being that under a black chief the department will be given a break by the activists and media. In fact, one of the first things Williams was to do in office was to disband a J. Edgar Hoover–type spying unit, for which the media praised him and which caused grumbling in the higher ranks.

The station, next door to a Thrifty supermarket that is scorched and gutted, is constructed like a fortress. Sergeant Cummings, a black twenty-three-year veteran, is preparing to go out on patrol. Over the years, he has seen everything—even the kind of thing he was now called to. Yes, responding to "shooting in progress," a couple of black-and-whites traveling with flashers and sirens had collided. A completely avoidable Keystone Kops scene to which a local TV crew got even before Cummings. The crowd of Angelenos he stepped through didn't snicker as the injured officers entered the ambulance under their own steam.

Cummings was to spend most of the rest of the evening at the emergency room of Hollywood Presbyterian with two of the embarrassed officers, both young blacks. The trademark joking went on. Even the black doctor who supervised the X-rays, prescribed the Tylenol and codeine, and authorized five days of sick leave joined in, leaving only the Latino civilian with the DTs on an adjacent bed to groan. It was late when the paperwork was finished and the doped-up cops were discharged. Cummings made a tsk-tsk noise when he heard over his car radio that the "shooting in progress" had been a false alarm. "Four black males throwing rocks," crackled a female voice on the radio. "Domestic violence, black male." Cummings saw no need to help out on these calls. He did, however, respond to one near Beverly Hills, where an elderly couple, Harry and Sylvia, had been held up by a young black man in a white T-shirt in the garage of their apartment building. The man had struck Sylvia on the head with the butt of his gun when she hesitated to part with her rings. Cummings helped calm the woman as a coed pair of officers gently took the details—was the man as dark as or lighter in color than, for example, the Sergeant was?

Things had changed in America, especially in mellow, ultra-sensitive L.A., since 1968 and the riots in Newark and Detroit when Dr. King was assassinated—you no longer opened fire, you no longer took human life to protect property.

Cummings is very dark. Back in the car, he sighed. It was too bad. This guy would probably fence the stuff with no problem, but such things had been going on since Cummings was a rookie. What was new was all these guns and the readiness of the kids to use them. Sylvia was actually lucky. Cummings himself was psychologically and otherwise prepared to retire. He had just been called to the bar after getting his law degree in night school, and looked forward to a second career, maybe something with corporations. However, he had decided with his wife to stick it out two more years for the full pension.

He too said loyally that the department shouldn't be blamed for not quelling the riot at the outset. Too much happened too fast, etc. But he offered an explanation for the fact that there did not seem to have been a contingency plan, and that there was no pre-verdict mobilization, which

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the reporter had not heard before: namely, that no one in the department expected the Rodney King cops all to be acquitted. Cummings was scandalized when they were. Could the riot have been stopped anyway if the order to shoot had been given? Cummings shook his head. Things had changed in America, especially in mellow, ultra-sensitive L.A., since 1968 and the riots in Newark and Detroit when Dr. King was assassinated—you no longer opened fire, you no longer took human life to protect property. This, in Cummings's opinion, was progress. Nevertheless, to protect his children, he lived even farther out than Natale, clear over the mountains in the desert hamlet of Palmdale.

The sergeant is both smart and typical. Like the KAs, black Americans who can depart the inner city tend to do so. The vital difference is that while much of the KA middle class commutes to Koreatown to work, the ordinary black middle-class intact family that departs South-Central does so forever, never looking back, leaving Koreans to man the commercial trenches, dubious "activists" to prey on emotions of futility and self-pity, and the kids of adolescent mothers to grow up without those proverbial good role models.

The reporter was to visit South-Central again. There he met more than one bigshot with a manicure, permanent wave, outsize rings, a Cadillac in the parking lot, and a wall of plaques commemorating his services to the community. As a rule, these gentleman had nothing bad to say to a white reporter about the rioters. Indeed, for most of them, the events didn't constitute a riot at all but a "rebellion," with everything that implies of justifiable and constructive action. The fellows who beat that truck driver on T.V. and are in custody have even been honored with a sobriquet—"The L.A. Six." It wasn't in the power of black leaders to stop the rebellion, nor was it their job. Whites should heed the message, one such leader told the reporter. If jobs, grants, and new welfare programs weren't forthcoming, this rebellion would be just an appetizer. As for the KAs, their losses were unfortunate, but South-Central would be better off without so many liquor stores.

That's an idea almost everyone agrees on. The Rev. Ed Grice of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, who wants not a single liquor store rebuilt, is doing something about it. The SCLC has a spick-and-span office a hop and a jump from both some charred remnants of KA businesses, and some side-streets where blacks keep neat lawns and make courageous attempts to lead decent, law-abiding lives with little money and much ideological confusion. It's not easy. Consider that the logo of the SCLC features, of course, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., yet in the lobby, his icon-portrait shares pride of place with that of Malcolm X. Both men have to be somersaulting in their graves to be married like this, and the fact that they are means that King's apostles at the SCLC have had to corrupt his legacy to appeal to the younger generation. Rev. Grice, your comparatively attractive sort of activist, is ready to half-admit as much. Malcolm's writings are little read. The young, says Grice, simply equate him with aggressive pride, which is enough to make him their hero. The various churchmen, in contrast, seem weak, and the churches in South-Central are locked except on Sunday mornings.

It wasn't so in Crocker, Texas, where Grice grew up singing hymns and using the cast-off school texts of white kids. Though not a bitter type, he's bitter about the poor formal education a racist country gave him. He nevertheless pulled himself into the middle class—for twelve years before coming to the SCLC, he actually worked at the Federal Reserve Bank. The number of blacks who have quit such jobs in the big world to come back and work directly for their people may be counted on the fingers of one hand. The black middle class, Grice admits, has deserted its brethren. Furthermore, much of the so-called culture that blacks are foisting on themselves is just appalling, especially the gangsta' rap hypnotizing and brutalizing the young. Grice's eldest son is a rapper himself, but with a difference. His group, Apocalypse, pushes Christian nonviolence and personal salvation. While under no illusion that Apocalypse will overtake Ice-T on MTV, Grice counts his blessings. He says he tries to get his younger kids to understand that Michael Jordan should be admired not for his millions but

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for his self-discipline. Blacks must take a portion of the blame for their plight and assume much of the responsibility for climbing out of it.

Which isn't to say that Grice is one of your too few black conservatives. From his angle, they're sucking up to the powers-that-be by blaming the victim. For though legalized racism may be a thing of the past in the United States of America, you still haven't got a level playing field—a pregnant woman in South-Central doesn't get the prenatal care at an under-funded clinic that a woman in Beverly Hills gets from her doctor, and if a black and a white with identical jobs and credit histories go to the Bank of America for a business or housing loan, the white is likelier to get a yes than the black. So why not found bigger, stronger, more aggressive black banks with the black money out there, or the black version of the *kye*, the hybrid lottery and savings-and-loan scheme to which masses of KAs belong? That's an idea, Grice says, without enthusiasm. Or why not mobilize families—even in South-Central, there are intact families—to run mom-and-pop shops for fifteen hours a day in place of KAs? Because, says Grice, blacks don't have that kind of cultural tradition, nor should they be asked to behave as if they did—they're Americans, not foreigners! He counters a white reporter's uppity questions by saying that capitalism breeds an underclass, and declaring that it's a government's duty to put and keep a floor under every person's feet, as in Sweden.

All that is theoretical, however, compared with Grice's campaign this summer, aimed at stopping the rebuilding of the liquor stores. It fits in with the nationwide SCLC war on drugs that he has headed locally for a couple of years. Here is where black and KA interests collide. He insists, as do many other blacks and indeed KAs, that the media have it wrong, that the problem between the two groups isn't racial. True, many KA merchants were cold to their black customers. They didn't hang out, they didn't show their appreciation, they were suspicious. Though this was no justification for looting and burning, Grice believes he owes no apology to Jin Lee and T.S. Chung for failing to stop the gang members: Did any KA apologize when a KA grocer—in a locally notorious incident long before the Rodney King verdict—was let off with a fine after shooting to death a black girl in a dispute over a bottle of soda pop? In any event, some good may come of the fires if those liquor stores that were such eyesores, such magnets for prostitutes and gamblers and hoodlums and casualties, aren't resurrected. When it's suggested to him that demand for the pain-killing booze will remain what it was, simply making survivors like Roy Kim rich, Grice says he doubts it. His allies on the City Council have rammed through an ordinance requiring "community hearings" on each application to rebuild.

The trouble is that, like Roy Kim's, most of these stores also carried sundries like bread, milk, and diapers. Now that most of them in South-Central are gone, and the chains aren't jumping into the breach, the sober poor have nowhere to go for necessities except the emergency handout distribution points. There's one at the African-American Community Unity Center, a disused church across the street from a bombed-out mall. The other day, the patient, tranquil, close-packed, fatalistic line—mainly women, a great many Hispanics, one black guy whose store was incinerated—meandered half a block in the sunshine to receive tortillas, instant mashed potatoes, flour, rice, canned tomatoes, a box of Pampers for each accompanying baby. "God bless," said one man as he took the food. "Rodeo Drive—Beverly Hills" said the T-shirt on a teenaged mother. Everything was free, donated by charities and utility companies. You weren't even asked for food stamps or ID, so in a way it was a bonanza. There's also used clothing given away twice weekly. But it won't go on forever. At some point the charities will tire and Southern California Edison will decide it has done enough of the right thing, the TV pictures of the riot will fade into memories. Where then will the Pampers and Wonderbread be available, if the Kims and Lees aren't permitted back—or indeed, decide they've had it?

That's what the Jewish middlemen decided after the

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Watts riots in 1965. They got out any which way, taking the payoff on riot insurance if they carried any, or selling their stores cheap to blacks who thought they could make a go of it. So that when the KAs landed a decade later, it was usually not a Jew they took over from, but a black who had realized that for one reason or another he couldn't earn a living in a risky black neighborhood turning Latino. It's too early to say whether the KAs will do as the Jews did, at the most holding on to some properties and leasing them to even greener immigrants, Cambodians for example. On the one hand, the victimized KAs have less to fall back on than their Jewish predecessors—they and their community are much newer to the country and some, lacking savings and insurance, may have no choice but to go back if they can. On the other hand, the riot, and the attitude of the police and City Hall, have cut deep. Even those who do re-open in South-Central will probably only remain temporarily, until their Americanized children have been educated and they can afford to get out. Instead of rebuilding the liquor stores, Ed Grice suggests, groups of KAs should build proper supermarkets. But among neither blacks nor KAs will you find anyone who sincerely believes there is a long-term future for the likes of Roy Kim in the area.

Like the KAs, black Americans who can depart the inner city tend to do so. The vital difference is that while much of the KA middle class commutes to Koreatown to work, the ordinary black middle-class intact family that departs South-Central does so forever, never looking back, leaving Koreans to man the commercial trenches.

Not even the KA youngsters who have bucked the quotas on Asians and matriculated at some of the nation's finest universities believe it. Unsurprisingly, a percentage majoring in the humanities and social sciences will repeat a line to the effect that the Koreans, the blacks, and the Latinos are all victims of capitalism together. Which is to say, they are minorities whom the racist Anglo powers set at each other's throats to divert them from what's really being perpetrated. It would be surprising if, on campuses like UCLA, Stanford, and Berkeley, certain sons and daughters of KAs who slaved 15-hour days to pay their tuitions didn't learn to parrot this stuff. Indeed, a few Americanized kids go so far as to confess their own people's, their own parents' guilt for what happened. "We are an insolent community," says a KA young woman with a higher degree whom it would be cruel to identify. "We don't make an effort to reach outside." Talk about blaming the victim! The solution is therefore to be less Korean, nicer, to ally with other discriminated-against minorities, lighten up, and get collectively empowered. Yet even among these kids, you won't find any who foresee South-Central full of KA merchants again.

Bringing us back to T.S. Chung. Although he majored in sociology at Harvard and ran for state assembly as a Democrat, he calls himself a fiscal and social conservative. Yes, the KA shopkeepers are the foot-soldiers of capitalism, he says. No, what happened to too many of them wasn't capitalism's fault.

Notwithstanding the impression you get from talking with those KAs at UCLA not majoring in the hard sciences, engineering, economics, pre-law and pre-med, most K.A.s are on the same wave length as T.S. Those of the first or second generation who have been naturalized or were born here tend to vote Republican after their move to the suburbs. Then why did T.S. run as a Democrat? His motive was less ideological than practical. The district he contested, including a part of Koreatown, is largely Hispanic and poor—not exactly Reagan country. Furthermore, at least in California, the Democratic party, the old home of minorities, tries harder, wooing Asians and making room for their up-and-comers. T.S., 35 years of age, thinks the Republicans are missing a bet there. He can also imagine not remaining a Democrat forever. Post-riot, his politics are up in the air. As is the faith of ordinary KAs in the American way. Previously, most believed that each KA or KA family could fixate on working hard and getting an education, and America would pay them back with both prosperity and safety. Where there's smoke there's fire—the KAs were somewhat insular, they did shun politics in their new land, many of the first generation failed to trade in their old citizenship for U.S., a prerequisite for voting here. The faith that good Calvinist behavior at all times would be enough to ensure protection in a bad time, that political deals could wait, is probably gone for good. You hear new buzzwords. Organize! Register! Pressurize! The bitter, quietly self-contained, and by no means nerdish T.S. is even surer than before that the KAs can't really make it in America if they don't play the political game. He is more aware than most of the bitter people at the victims' center are, however, of how long and hard the road to political leverage is going to be for a model minority, i.e., one that is really small and causes so few problems that it needn't be appeased.

Immigration continues, but there aren't that many KAs yet. Once established, they spread out and the females intermarry with Anglos. The formation of lobbies with other Asian-Americans to promote common interests is a much-talked-about possibility, maybe utopian—what does a KA have in common with someone from Cambodia, except that they both have to crash the same quota at Berkeley and, if male, can't get a white girlfriend to save their lives? A first-generation KA and a first-generation Cambodian-American have as much in common as a Scot and a Ukrainian. The KAs will probably have to look out for themselves. It's easy

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to be harder on them than the facts justify. Even T.S. may be guilty of this. After all, most have been here less than a generation. It would be demanding the impossible to expect them not only to have set themselves on their economic feet and begun sending their sons and daughters to be doctors and lawyers, but also to have acquired the unlisted numbers of the mayor, the governor, and so on. If there could have been a high-level decision to throw Koreatown to the wolves, as T.S. suspects, it was because the riots came too soon, before persons of his generation had had the chance to become insiders.

The right phone calls to the right people, followed by the right decisions by those people, could have made the difference, Chung thinks. He believes that the riot could have been contained in the first two hours, as Watts was, if the police had cordoned off South-Central. In other words, there were opportunistic neighborhood looters all over town, but the elements who did the breaking in and torching were gang members who came up largely from South-Central. Why didn't the police throw up a perimeter? Though the case law is weak, T.S. has considered a suit against the city for dereliction. He's looking forward to William Webster's report on the LAPD's performance and the anatomy of the events. It will be interesting to find out whether Koreatown and KA businesses elsewhere suffered heavily because they were in the way of the predators, or whether the gangs conspired before the King verdict to hit them. In any case, the Webster report will have to be credible and the victimizers will have to be seen to be punished if much faith is to be restored.

The faith that good Calvinist behavior at all times would be enough to ensure protection in a bad time, that political deals could wait, is probably gone for good. You hear new buzzwords. Organize! Register! Pressurize!

T.S. has agreed to serve on the blue-ribbon panel called Rebuild L.A. This includes the governor, the mayor, the new police chief, people of every one of the ethnicities, Cardinal Mahoney, Hollywood lights, everybody and his sister. Rebuild L.A. is supposed to pick up the pieces and reassemble them so that there isn't a next time. In practice, it's a fine example of American optimism coupled with the reckoning that if everyone is allowed to have his say and given at least a crumb of the reconstruction pie, an affirmative reply can finally be given to Rodney King's heartfelt question, "Can we live together?" Each of the ethnic and gender appointees is therefore supposed to look out for his group's interest, while keeping the good of the whole shaken city foremost in mind, and of course being realistic. The potential for trouble is obvious. T.S., for example, understands why blacks desperate over the underclass don't want the liquor-and-sundries stores rebuilt. Though he doesn't buy the metaphor of the KA merchant as drug pusher, he's sympathetic, and though he suspects the alcohol problem is more a question of culture and character than availability, he readily admits that South-Central would probably be better off without a liquor outlet on every corner. But the ordinance mandating community hearings, where the activists will have a field day, is unjust, mischievous. It targets flea markets, as well as liquor stores. Why effectively punish KAs, who weren't breaking the law? If these businesses are to be gotten rid of, their owners should be compensated.

The municipal Community Redevelopment Agency has enough money to compensate the victims from South-Central who weren't insured and really want to go elsewhere. T.S. estimates the amount at $50 million. Realistically, he doubts whether he or any combination of thirtysomething KAs has the clout to pry that sum from the CRA. Demonstrations of brotherhood may lower the temperature but won't much enhance the chances. There have been interracial, inter-communal parades and meetings in the wake of the riots, church visits and talk show encounters, including some by T.S. himself. Yet he doubts that the fruits of political power can be plucked without the acquisition of that power, something that takes a law-abiding community much time. As a result the KAs may have to bail out their own most needy victims, not an impossibility for a community that found $40 million in its own pockets to spend on building and refurbishing its churches in the last few years.

"Still the most civilized country in the world," the young, temporarily ruined Jin Lee will tell you without a trace of irony. Fewer Korean tourists are coming to L.A. these days, but immigrants are still arriving at LAX and hardly anyone who has settled here is going back, never mind that the South Korean economy is healthier for the moment than the American. Seventy-two hours of chaos and self-defense, a glimpse of Beirut, is enough to re-educate, but far from enough to gut that unique and resilient promise known as America in the eyes of people from elsewhere on the planet. "Can we live together?" the black ex-con arrested by white cops asked while portions of the city went up in flames and the freeways clogged with escapees. T.S. Chung isn't the only one who's agnostic on that ultimate question. There could be a next time later this summer, or not for another twenty-seven years, or never at all. Riots in that respect may be something like earthquakes. Anything is possible, anything but the disappearance of the Kims and the Kings in our midst. ❐

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Tigers by the Tail

by Pete du Pont

Hong Kong

The Washington foreign policy establishment and the press speak warmly of moving from the Cold War into a New World Order—from COMECON, the Warsaw Pact, and SALT to Rio, the G-7, and the EC. The trouble is that, like the Keynesian economists before them, New World Order advocates have trouble fitting the facts into their theory. In this case the facts include Yugoslavia, Tibet, and the recent Danish referendum that threatens to scuttle the "new Europe." And a visit to three of the "Asian Tigers"—South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—is enough to convince one that the conventional wisdom on a New World Order, even regarding some of the era's resounding success stories, is shaky indeed.

South Korea and Taiwan have blossomed under hard work and capitalism. Buildings are going up, traffic clogs the highways, and new business investment is at an all-time high. In thirty years, South Korea's GNP has gone from $2 billion to $28 billion, and the number of cars on its roads from 2,500 to 2.5 million. Taiwan has needed only forty-three years to grow from a militarized agrarian society into a politically pluralistic economic power with the largest foreign reserves of any nation in the world, some $83 billion.

Yet both countries are burdened by relics of statism that will pose a significant challenge to modernization over the next two decades. South Korea is perversely dominated by *chaebols*, big conglomerates that compete for government financial assistance in a kind of upside-down welfare state. The country is also among the world's most protectionist. For example, between import and point of sale $25,600 in taxes and tariffs is added to the $16,000 base price of a typical American automobile (see table below). It is unlikely that Korea will continue to prosper under protectionism: as impressive as the country's export performance has been, the tariffs exact a damaging toll on its consumer economy, and one suspects the problem will grow worse as international communications show the Koreans lower-priced consumer goods in other nations. Although there are plans to lower tariffs in coming years, there is no sign that the South Korean government perceives unfree trade as a problem.

Taiwanese leaders, on the other hand, recognize that protectionism hurts their economy. Yet the government still controls the major industries—shipping, steel, chemicals, sugar—and its 1991 six-year plan calls for the practice to continue. Taiwan still depends on government industrial policies to direct development.

Both countries have moved away from the closed politics that marked their early years. In South Korea, Chung Ju Yung, a wealthy industrialist, is making a vigorous third-party run for the presidency. Taiwan's new Democratic Progressive party is flexing its legislative muscle—quite literally. Riot police had to be called in recently when DPP members of parliament began throwing chairs, bottles, and fists at the prime minister as he gave his annual address to the legislature.

By contrast, Hong Kong, as a British colony, has had a completely closed political system for the last century. Although recent elections for the legislative council provided a whiff of pluralism, Hong Kong will still be a functioning crown colony when it is handed over lock, stock, and barrel to Peking in 1997. This hasn't stopped Hong Kong from having the most successful economy of the three nations. It has the world's largest port, its third largest financial center, and an unemployment rate of just 2 percent, despite having absorbed millions of refugees from Communism over the years.

And if there is a common thread linking the three countries in the 1990s it is Communism—as a practical issue, as a defining ideology, as an imminent threat. New World Order wisdom holds that China is going capitalist and that North Korea will temper

Korea: Taxing a U.S. Automobile

Cost factor	Formula	1991	1992
A. CIF value	Base	16,000	16,000
B. Tariff	*A* x tariff	3,200*	2,720†
C. Special Excise Tax (SET)	(*A* + *B*) x 25%	4,800	4,680
D. Education tax on SET	*C* x 30%	1,440	1,404
E. Banking, Customs	*A* x 3%	480	480
F. Distributor cost	***A* + *B* + *C* + *D* + *E***	**25,920**	**25,284**
G. Distribution Markup	*F* x 20%	5,184	5,057
H. Value Added Tax	(*F* + *G*) x 10%	3,110	3,034
I. Retail Price	***F* + *G* + *H***	**34,214**	**33,375**
J. Acquisition Tax	*I* x 2%	684	668
K. Registration Tax	*I* x 6%	2,053	2,002
L. Subway Bonds	*I* x 20%	6,843	6,675
TOTAL CUSTOMER COST	*I* + *J* + *K* + *L*	43,794	42,720

*20%. †17%. All prices in U.S. dollars. Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Korea

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its ways with the eventual death of 80-year-old ruler Kim Il-Sung. It sounds good if you say it fast, but a tour of Panmunjom, in the demilitarized zone an hour north of Seoul, leaves little doubt that North Korean Communism is still firmly in place and aggressively focused on South Korea.

Two days before our arrival, three North Korean infiltrators were shot trying to bring plastic explosives across the border into South Korea. Loudspeakers from propaganda villages still blare music across the demarcation line. American soldiers report they are still hailed by name, invited to dinner, and promised a better life in North Korea. A dozen sets of binoculars were constantly trained on us, and no doubt we were photographed as well.

Taiwan has an easier time of it; economic relationships with the PRC are expanding, and Taiwanese businessmen visit the mainland to supervise factories they own there. But Peking and the U.N. recognize but one China, and Taiwan—although enjoying *de facto* independence—is a part of it. Discussion during the 1991 election campaign of formalizing that independence prompted the Peking *People's Daily* to warn that China "would not sit idly by" if that thought were pursued. More directly, PRC president Yang Shangkun warned the Taiwanese, "Those who play with fire will be burned." Taiwan certainly feels the heat, and is nervously watching Hong Kong, the domino in line ahead of it. For it is in Hong Kong that the conventional wisdom of the New World Order comes face-to-face with the future of Communism. Sold out in an uncharacteristic episode of weakness on Mrs. Thatcher's part, Hong Kong returns to the PRC in 1997, presenting a test of the proposition that a Communist nation can democratize.

Each day in Asia, I read rosy prognoses for 1997. The *Korea Herald* quoted a local official as saying that under PRC control Hong Kong would become the "mother of all 'dragons.'" In a burst of naïveté, an Exxon official proclaimed that the PRC would never expropriate Hong Kong because that would violate its commitments.

More pragmatic observers hold that the PRC wouldn't undermine Hong Kong because they need the foreign exchange, the access to the West, the capital structure. The pragmatists note that the government has permitted markets to flourish in the southern provinces of Guangzhou (Canton) and Fujian. Perhaps, but Chinese history shows a cyclical tension between capital and coast that erupts every few decades. Each time the entrepreneurial coast opens a window to the West, the poorer, more authoritarian capital decides it can tolerate it no longer and steps in.

Even though the Joint Declaration gives Britain the right to run Hong Kong until 1997, there are already signs that the British position is untenable. Construction of Hong Kong's new airport was blocked by the PRC until it received political and economic concessions. And in dozens of small matters the PRC is gently shutting the door—in obstructing the privatization of a government radio station, for instance.

As for privatization, what will happen to Hong Kong's schools in 1997? According to Gerard A. Postiglione of the University of Hong Kong, the colony's schools—indigenous, British, and missionary—were originally all private. But over the years, the government has increased its subsidies to schools, and now controls virtually all of them. What do you suppose they'll be teaching in 1997? Wouldn't it be wise to begin reprivatizing them right now?

Even if the PRC army does not move across the border in 1997, does not destroy the buildings, and does not disrupt trade, the golden goose of capitalism can be starved as well as strangled. Obsessive regulation comes naturally to Communists, and the honey pot is temptingly sweet; with the quiet expropriation of a billion here, a billion there, Hong Kong's economy could die. According to William McGurn, Washington bureau chief of *National Review* and an old China hand, this is exactly what happened in Shanghai. McGurn, whose book *Perfidious Albion* charts the betrayal of Hong Kong, suggests that the same thing could happen in the colony.

A few Hong Kong Chinese, like Legislative Council member Martin Lee, keep demanding freedom and insisting on democracy. But in my meetings with the American Chamber of Commerce and other business groups in Hong Kong, I heard a distressingly familiar refrain. Even after Tiananmen Square, after the brutalization of Tibet, after the recent test of a 1,000-kiloton nuclear weapon, the line is the same: *We don't want to upset the PRC.* Alarmingly, that is the same line President Bush used in Kiev, trying to hold together the Soviet Union for Mikhail Gorbachev. It is the same green light Secretary of State Baker gave the Serbs in Yugoslavia.

William McGurn defines Hong Kong optimists as those who have foreign passports. They are already expressing their opinion on the New World Order—with their feet. Women who have the means often go abroad to bear children, in order to assure their children a foreign passport. And the government's own statistics show that about one percent of Hong Kong's population emigrates annually.

The British have left Hong Kong residents very little maneuvering room. The treaties are signed. There will be no plebiscite, no steps taken to ensure majority rule in the Legislative Council. Given the past record of Communist governments in honoring their treaties, isn't now the best moment for the Hong Kong Chinese to make their case, while there is still time and still some measure of *de jure* power? Isn't now the time for Hong Kong's natural allies—the United States, Australia, and Canada—to move to strengthen the colony's position through Radio Free Asia broadcasts to the PRC, for example, or conditional MFN extension or expanded immigration opportunities for Hong Kong Chinese?

Absolutely not, says Elsie Tu, a white-haired elder on the Legislative Council. For Hong Kong to seek American assistance "would be like waving a red flag at Peking."

The PRC's position in negotiations with Britain was that the original Hong Kong treaties were unequal treaties, and thus not binding. Surely the PRC and Hong Kong are "unequal countries": one a sleeping giant of a billion poor, underskilled people spread over 4 million square miles, the other an island of 6 million highly educated entrepreneurs. Elsie Tu is probably wrong that a democratic Lilliput can coexist with a totalitarian Gulliver.

Communism's last three redoubts outside of Cuba now define the Western edge of the Pacific rim. North Korea, Vietnam, and the PRC defy the New World Order; they seem to have missed it. True believers assure us, however, that two of them count for little and the third is mellowing. Maybe. But to anyone looking north from Hong Kong Island, China's ideology seems less an anachronism than a clear and present danger. ❐

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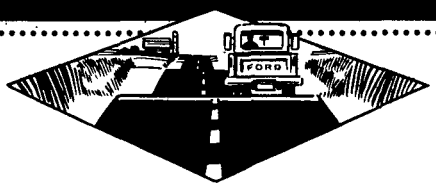

Men and Children First

by Julie Hoffman

Army Maj. Rhonda Cornum, whose Blackhawk helicopter was shot down over Kuwait, was one of only two American female POWs taken in the Gulf War. As such, her testimony about her week of captivity carries great weight with the special presidential commission looking into the existing ban on women in combat. Major Cornum happens to be a strong advocate of lifting that ban, and when asked if she had been abused during her captivity she replied that she had been treated no differently from any of the men. But when one of the commissioners, Elaine Donnelly, asked her to elaborate, Major Cornum dropped a bombshell. She had, she said, been "violated manually—vaginally and rectally."

Donnelly's question was actually a follow-up. All along the commission had been led to believe that our female POWs had not been tortured or abused. If not for an inadvertent slip in earlier testimony by Hays Parks, the Pentagon's expert on the Geneva Convention and POWs—he mentioned that both Maj. Cornum and Army Specialist Melissa Coleman had been subject to "sexual indecencies"—we might never have heard the truth.

At a time when a Secretary of the Navy is forced to resign because drunken aviators got out of hand at the annual Tailhook convention, it is astonishing that the molestation of American women POWs has been all but ignored. There were no screaming front-page headlines; no special edition of "Nightline"; no exposés on "60 Minutes"; no outrage on the part of those who only months before had presented Anita Hill as the victim of shocking sexual harassment.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and his Pentagon appear to be more afraid of the issue of women in combat than they were of Saddam Hussein. With the movement to repeal the combat exemption for women picking up steam, even the most battle-scarred warriors are too intimidated to speak their minds. It invites the suspicion that the year-old cover-up of what happened to our women POWs in Iraq was motivated less by respect for the women's privacy than by politics.

"Any active-duty military person has a lot to lose," says Marine Col. John Ripley, USMC. "If they bring out a joint chief or a young lieutenant colonel up for promotion, there is simply no question that he is muzzled. There is nothing overt here, no piece of paper or instructions. But it is understood that if he spills the beans he'll have to eat them." (Colonel Ripley retired a week after his commission testimony.)

Colonel Ripley is a 30-year veteran who served two tours in Vietnam and has been decorated with the Navy Cross, a Silver Star, two awards of the Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Distinguished Service order, and the Cross of Gallantry, and was nominated for the congressional Medal of Honor. His was the most remarkable testimony before the commission, for two reasons. First, he gave a riveting account of the gruesomeness of real-life ground combat—like the 300-percent casualty rate in certain theaters of the Vietnam war. Second, he gave a frank answer to the question of whether women should serve in combat: "Hell, no."

In July 1991, Congress passed the Defense Authorization for 1992, which repealed the combat exemption for female aviators in the Navy and Air Force. The same legislation also established the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. Though it makes little sense to repeal the combat exemption before the commission files its report, this is precisely what the legislation would allow.

Proponents point out that the legislation only repeals the combat exclusion for pilots, but there's little doubt that this is merely the thin end of the wedge. Colorado Democrat Pat Schroeder, House sponsor of the legislation, tipped her hand by introducing just a few weeks ago a measure that would chuck the current ban on homosexuals in the military, too. Anna Quindlen linked them in a recent column on the Tailhook incident: "It seems never to have occurred to [the military] that if you treat women like second class citizens by denying them promotion to combat positions, your male personnel will get the idea that they can treat them like second-class citizens in other ways, too."

Secretary Cheney has stated that he will direct no change in policy until the commission has filed its report to the President (due November 15), and he has taken no position on the combat exemption. But instead of dampening expectations, the Secretary of Defense talks about "expanding" roles for women. Indeed, in a televised interview on the conservative "Family Forum Live," he mentioned that in one of the battle groups he visited, the only ship that couldn't return enemy fire was the ammunition supply ship—because it was staffed by women. "We sometimes find ourselves in difficult positions where by virtue of having opened up opportunities we end up with that kind of situation," he said.

Much of the pressure on Cheney comes from a taxpayer-funded feminist lobby within his own department: the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). With an office in the Pentagon directly down the hall from the Secretary, the thirty-eight members—most of whom are women—enjoy the pro-

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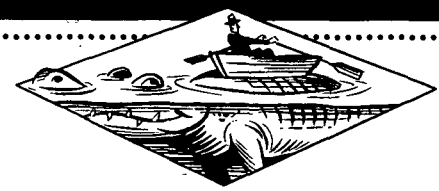
tocol rank of a three-star general and all the privileges that go with it, including direct access to the Secretary of Defense. DACOWITS voted last year in favor of putting women in combat and knows how to take advantage of the old double standard even as they are bent on saying it doesn't exist. Last summer, for example, as the legislation to repeal the combat exemption for female aviators was being debated, members of DACOWITS coordinated lobbying efforts with uniformed female officers, who were allowed to violate military rules against such activities.

Like most of those who have propelled the social upheavals of the last twenty-five years, the GI Janes have been successful because they've been smart enough not to put it before the American people all at once in black-and-white. According to Maryland Democrat Beverly Byron of the House Armed Services Committee, lifting the exemption for female pilots is "what America perceives as the next step; totally consistent with the reasonable, acceptable, *incremental* process that I have found so successful over the years."

What should have been a fact-finding commission has turned into one big "gee-aren't-these-gals-great-and-courageous-and-don't-they-have-the-right-to-do-what-the-boys-do" fest. After three months of schmalz and generic praise of women, the commission had not yet gotten the Pentagon to hand over pregnancy rates from the Gulf, or statistics on how many women were sent home, how many were not deployable, and how many were raped. Of course, there were a few red faces when the USS *Acadia*—dubbed "The Love Boat"—returned home with one out of every ten women aboard pregnant.

Stung by the drunken antics of Navy pilots at Tailhook, the Administration proved it can move quickly when it wants to, collecting the scalp of Navy Secretary H. Lawrence Garrett III. But Secretary Cheney, who harbors presidential ambitions, is straddling the fence—and is under strong pressure to appoint a woman as Secretary of the Navy, which would all but clinch combat for women. And the language coming out of the Senate Armed Services Committee would *force* him to put women in "testing" combat roles. Does Cheney want to be remembered for the victory in the Gulf or as the guy who put your daughter in army boots? ❐

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL



Red Hills of Africa

by Ronald Radosh

When State President F.W. de Klerk pushed through his referendum on ending apartheid last March, he strengthened his support among the 40 percent of whites who back him, and struck a blow against a resurgent Afrikaner Conservative party. Both de Klerk and Nelson Mandela had to tread a thin line between enraging hardline Afrikaners and alienating the anti-apartheid movement, but it appeared that the African National Congress, in meeting with those it once condemned as racists, had finally recognized the de Klerk government as a legitimate body. Moreover, the ANC seemed to realize that its cadres were hardly ready to to govern a country rampant with violence and economic trouble. Far better to share power at first with moderate whites, and thereby avoid blame for a failure to come up with quick solutions. The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), made up of all political parties, now has a mandate to establish a new constitution and create an interim government.

Of course, it was all going too smoothly. In June, after scores of killings of Zulus by ANC sympathizers in townships, Zulu-speaking raiders rampaged through a migrant hostel in Boipatong, shooting and hacking to death forty-two squatters. The practice of "necklacing," favored by ANC "Comrades" and once endorsed by Winnie Mandela, continues unabated.

In the new South Africa, the once-underground Communist party (SACP) has become legal and is in the midst of a recruiting drive. One can find the *African Communist* or *Umsebenzi* at local newsstands, and the latter is now published within the country—not in East Germany. No longer is the party journal printed in a false cover (in 1988 it was called the *Good Food Guide*, in 1989 *Landscape Gardening*). *Business Day*, South Africa's *Wall Street Journal*, regularly prints the views of Communist leaders alongside those of corporate CEOs.

A secret document meant for the SACP's internal leadership, written this past June 20, accuses Nelson Mandela and the ANC leadership of "suffocating" the mass struggle, and of acting as if they were a regular party preparing for an electoral triumph. Calling for a "new terrain of struggle," the SACP leaders accuse the ANC of failing to exploit the "crisis of the regime" that caused de Klerk to move against apartheid, and of accepting unnecessary compromises: "[To gain] a transfer of power to the people, we need to see mass struggle as a permanent feature of South African life."

The SACP views CODESA not as an arena of constitutional negotiation but as a "site of struggle," forthrightly calling for "seizure and control of state power through a series of incremental steps." Their aim is to wage a series of immobilizing and demoralizing strikes until government passes over to the Communists and their allies. Typical is the recent action following the the Boipatong massacre in which SACP chief Chris Hani led 40,000 members of the party-controlled National Union of Metalworkers singing and toyi-toying through downtown Johannesburg.

But with Communism fallen and apartheid falling, why should we care that a powerful Communist party still holds forth in South Africa? The answer is put

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succinctly by the leading Western scholar of South African Communism, Heribert Adam of Simon Fraser University: "Because SACP members are the major force that dominates the theoretical debates and strategies within the broad apartheid opposition, its own practice of [or lack of] internal democracy influences the style of the entire movement." Americans sympathetic to Mandela prefer to ignore that the SACP has cemented its "people's alliance" with the ANC. Indeed, according to Thomas Lodge of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, by the end of the eighties, the party had recruited scores of top trade union leaders. Party membership has quintupled since 1989 to 25,000, and most of the new members are 25-to-30-year old militants from the township underclass—"street Jacobins of the 1970s ghetto revolts," to use Lodge's phrase. The respected British newsletter *Africa Confidential* said two years back that the SACP's "popularity is at an all-time high in the South African townships," and called the SACP and the ANC "one body with two heads."

A self-styled elitist group with secret membership, the SACP has maneuvered for control of the ANC for years. All SACP members are members of the ANC. The Communists control three-quarters of the ANC's 35-man National Executive Committee, and the party controls major posts in the ANC's policy-making divisions, including the offices of the president general, the secretary-general, and the treasurer-general.

For decades, the SACP—perhaps with only the French and American Communists as competition—was the most Stalinist of all the European Communist parties. It supported the crushing of Solidarity, the war in Afghanistan, and the complete suppression of Soviet dissidents.

The first hints at a revisionism came from Joe Slovo, long considered the "voice of South African Communism." Having sacrificed much of his life for the movement—along with his wife, who was killed in exile by a letter-bomb—Slovo enjoys considerable prestige. He was until 1990 the party's secretary-general, and once led Spear of the Nation (MK), its military-wing-in-exile. Slovo created a storm with his 1990 essay, "Has Socialism Failed?" in which he admitted that what destroyed East European socialism (the USSR was still intact) was the revolt of the population against regimes whose anti-democratic legacy had destroyed socialism's appeal.

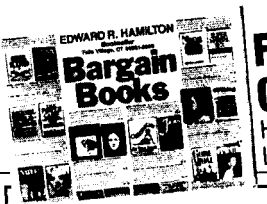
Slovo nonetheless reaffirmed his belief in "the future of socialism," holding that an "ideological offensive" by capitalists against socialism had to be challenged, and condemning "unilateral ideological disarmament," by which he meant the conclusion of American economist Robert Heilbroner and others on the left that democratic capitalism in practice had proved itself superior to *all* socialism. Indeed, Slovo claimed that "the theory of Marxism . . . remains valid," as did the Leninist concept of "dictatorship of the proletariat." But he also cited the Marxist heretic Rosa Luxemburg's polemic against Lenin: that freedom had to mean freedom for those against the government and for those who thought differently. At the time of civil war in 1918, he argued, Lenin was correct to oppose Luxemburg. But in the modern world, socialism could not be built if it opposed democracy. Without democracy, he warned, Communists could institute "a political tyranny over the whole of society."

Under Slovo's helm, the SACP proclaimed a new banner—towards "democratic socialism." Militants appeared wearing new T-shirts: "SACP Demands an Elected Non-Racial Constituent Assembly . . . Forward to Democratic Socialism." Their literature seemed inspired less by Karl Marx than by Michael Harrington, and they seemed to have forgotten what the Bolsheviks' view of a Constituent Assembly was in 1918. Slovo admitted that their own policies had "discredited the cause of socialism," and that the only way forward was "thoroughgoing democratic socialism."

But Slovo quickly backtracked. "There may be moments in the life of a revolution," he wrote, "which justify postponement of full democratic processes." When, precisely, critics asked, and who decides when that moment has arrived? The answer, of course, is the SACP, still proclaimed the "vanguard" of social change in South Africa—although Slovo says the party must "earn" the credit of vanguard, not merely proclaim it. Slovo was stacking his deck: the ANC has consistently stated that the SACP's vanguard status has been truly earned in struggle; hence their invincible alliance. And since the ANC is controlled by the SACP, one cannot imagine a situation in which they would suddenly take away their endorsement. In case there is confusion, Slovo explains that the SACP has already won its place "as a vanguard force by superior efforts of leadership and devotion to the cause of liberation." To read their internal debates was to be swirled back to the 1930s and '40s.

Central Committee members such as Brian Bunting, Govan Mbeki, Harry Gwala, and Mac Maharaj realized that it was impossible to defend Leninism while calling for programs that would undermine it. Gwala, a party chief in Natal, declared that Lenin had answered all basic political questions almost ninety years ago—and he warned his comrades of the dangers of Browderism, Menshevism, and Titoism. Socialism, he says, "does not become less [scientific] because of some malpractices."

Opposing these hardliners are middle-aged Marxist-Leninists who believe Stalinism and bureaucracy destroyed "true socialism." *Humanitarian* Communists,



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they say, would not make the same mistakes. Leading this group is Jeremy Cronin, whom *Business Day* wrote was "fast becoming the most prolific party theorist in town." According to Cronin, the models for South Africa's future are Cuba and Vietnam—whose revolutions, he says, were indigenous revolts in which these nations moved from campaigns for national liberation to a second stage of social revolution.

A third group—the *soi-disant* "democratic socialists"—supports Slovo, but goes even further. Coming to the party from the COSATU trade union movement, whose former head Cyril Ramaphosa recently took over leadership of the ANC, this group would subordinate the party to workers' interests. Joining them is a small group of New Leftists, like student leader Jonny Steinberg, who favors multi-party democracy and pluralism. If Lenin's approach is affirmed, Steinberg argues, the SACP will end up "reproducing the Stalinist legacy."

The toughest campaign waged against the SACP comes from within the ANC leadership, in the form of a determined attack waged by the ANC's dynamic minister of communications, Pallo Jordan, who lived for decades in exile in London and other Western capitals. Jordan is obviously highly influenced by libertarian elements of the British New Left, as well as by his time in the early 1960s at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he first made contact with Communists, Marxists, and independent leftists.

In a long article published in the South African magazine *Transformation*, Jordan proclaimed that Slovo had given no coherent explanation for what had gone wrong with socialism: he had merely "identified the symptoms of the illness but not its basic cause." In all Communist parties, Jordan noted, those who sought to explore reality had been branded traitors and spies, and then framed up and executed. His answer was to look anew at Bukharin and particularly Trotsky for Marxist alternatives to Stalinism, in order "to rediscover the true meaning of [Communism]." Jordan held out the gauntlet: the SACP's Stalinist credentials are too well known for anyone to think that it has changed. "Any regular reader of SACP publications," Jordan wrote, "can point to a persistent pattern of praise and support for every violation of freedom perpetrated by the Soviet leadership, both before and after the death of Stalin." The SACP's political culture has "produced a spirit of intolerance, petty intellectual thuggery and political dissembling."

Jordan followed up with a short piece in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*. He had not asked Slovo to "leave the Marxist tradition," he wrote, but he *had* confronted him with "a long tradition of Marxist opposition to Stalinism." Yet Slovo had not adequately responded, since, as Jordan put it, "it is not sufficient for the SACP to say 'terrible things happened.'" Socialism could be democratic but it had developed "in an authoritarian and totalitarian fashion." By identifying that system with socialism, the Communists had in fact discredited socialism. In particular, the SACP didn't have to applaud the Prague Spring of 1968 or the Jaruzelski coup against Solidarity in 1981. Slovo finally responded this past February by pointing out that the opponents of Stalinism cited by Jordan had themselves helped lay the foundations of totalitarianism: Trotsky, for example favored trade unions' becoming little more than a wing of the state apparatus, and in the 1920s attacked the Worker's Opposition for making "a fetish of democratic principles."

These debates go beyond internecine quarreling: the future society envisioned by the ANC leaders depends on their outcome. And on the two central issues facing the new South Africa—the economy and the political system—the recent SACP Congress gives little ground for hope. Slovo has downplayed talk of nationalization, and had stated publicly that only a mixed economy can guarantee economic growth. Rejecting bureaucratic state control along Soviet lines, Slovo favors public control through participation by producers at all levels—what the German social democrats call co-determination. Such a program amounts essentially to a social-democratic welfare state with a strong private sector, but those who saw some hope in it were to be disappointed. At the recent SACP Congress, Slovo and his moderates found themselves out of power.

Taking over the top office was Chris Hani, a hardline militant whose base was in the MK. While the Slovo center of the SACP sees an interim government as the only way forward, the hardliners do not. In their lexicon, interim government is a Popular Front phase in which party control is cemented, and after which the dictatorship of the proletariat begins. Party propaganda still calls the de Klerk government an "illegitimate regime," and the SACP accuses the State President of trying to protect "the accumulated privileges of whites." Thus, they call for an interim government with "real powers"—e.g., "a new people's army and people's police force," along with a state-controlled press. This interim government will be one in which "the ANC must have real authority . . . part of the process of transfer of power to the people."

The party and the ANC still talk about the necessity of exploring moves towards nationalization when the new government assumes power. Mandela has stated that the ANC favors a mixed economy, and that the new government will honor foreign debts incurred by the de Klerk regime, but the new ANC secretary-general, Cyril Ramaphosa—who refused to allow party leaders within the ANC to proclaim their identities—has repudiated Mandela on the debt repayment issue; the ANC and the SACP still espouse nationalization, and take every opportunity to point out that Mandela speaks only for himself. Cronin condemns the idea of a mix as "reformist" and "social democratic."

At the January 1991 SACP Party Congress, the first held openly in South Africa, the comrades deleted all Slovo's references to "democratic socialism" from the party's program; according to the SACP majority, socialism is *inherently* democratic. (So much for the experience of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.) Hani recently praised the PLO for leading the way via the Intifada, even though it had not succeeded in gaining territory or capturing power, like Castro in Cuba or the North Vietnamese in Saigon. The PLO's example, he said, was the one he hoped the SACP would emulate.

Mandela has not yet commented on Hani's vision, although even he hails Castro as an ally. Last year he appeared at Castro's side in Havana, yelling: "Long live Fidel Castro! Long live the Cuban Revolution!" Indeed, the current American left campaign to end the embargo on Cuba and to promote sympathy for Castro stems from a little known alliance forged between the American Communists and the SACP hardliners. Hani toured the U.S. under CPUSA auspices in May 1991, and in August, CPUSA National

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Committee members Angela Davis and Charlene Mitchell visited South Africa as the SACP's guests. "You are our demonstration that Communist parties and socialism are historically relevant," Davis told them. "You cannot let us down."

Upon taking power, the SACP hopes to lay the foundation for a revived Communist International, in which a wealthy South Africa could provide the aid to save Castro's revolution. At a November 1991 press conference, Hani announced a campaign of support for Cuba, a campaign that originated with the effort begun by their American Communist allies.

Does the SACP have a future? A respected political scientist at the University of Cape Town, David Welsh, notes its strong support in the unions, among radicalized black youth in the townships, and in intellectual circles. But he stresses that its viability rests, ultimately, on its close ties with the ANC, and he thinks that these will wither as the ANC grows in strength. He argues that the pressure of events will push the SACP towards social democracy, that it will evolve into merely another contender for political influence in a functioning democracy.

That may have been true at one point, but as Richard L. Sklar, former president of the African Studies Association, writes in *Dissent*, the party has rejected "a fundamental ideological shift from Leninism to democratic socialism," and as a result, virtually no left force in South Africa "upholds [democratic] socialism as an ideal." At present, the SACP is hanging on, and there is no clue that its influence or control of the ANC is waning. On the contrary, the ties with the unions have increased with the election of scores of COSATU activists to party leadership. And public opinion polls among blacks indicate most are ready to support the SACP program of full nationalization. Indeed, the hardline Stalinist Harry Gwala, an ANC official in Natal, recently told the press, "We will kill Inkatha warlords," hardly a prescription for peace and order in the townships.

The SACP would plant "the first building blocks" of socialism during the first free government, Chris Hani assures us. The SACP would not want to run agriculture and education; rather, they would "be looking at areas like policing, broadcasting." Hani stresses that any new parliament and government "must reflect the input of COSATU and the party." ANC candidates would have to guarantee party members a percentage of spots.

The problem, according to Pallo Jordan, is that the tensions within his country "could cause us to move in a Stalinist one-party direction." How ironic that as Communism collapses everywhere, the former liberation movement of that nation's blacks is poised to implement a Marxist economic system within their nation, threatening to erode the basis of freedom and prosperity on which a new South Africa could be built. ❐

BEN STEIN'S DIARY

Mind Games

by Benjamin J. Stein

Friday

Graduation day. A big day in the life of Tommy Stein, age four years and ten months. He's graduating from pre-school at Temple Israel on Hollywood Boulevard. The school is throwing a bash for the kids and the parents at 10:30 this morning.

I called Alex, my fugitive, once and future wife, to remind her to bring her camera because I had forgotten mine at the beach. "Oh, no problem," she said in her beautiful voice. "I hired a video camera man to make a video of the ceremony. It'll save us from having to worry about it while we're watching Tommy graduate."

"How much does this cost?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know. About $400, I think."

Wow. Wow and double wow. I guess Alex hasn't heard about the recession. More power to her. We've always divided our worries this way. I worry about money and Alex worries about my criticizing her about money. There we are. I guess that about covers it.

The ceremony was cute. The boys and girls sang and pretended to be elephants and snakes. The rabbi told us how lucky we all were to have such great pre-K teachers, and we are.

All around us in the auditorium, parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters and nannies aplenty laughed and beamed as the ceremony went on interminably, with bouquets for everyone in Hollywood from everyone in Hollywood. Behind me, a family spoke Russian. Another row back, a family spoke animated Hebrew.

The rabbi went on about how we should thank our parents and teachers and our nannies, and we should. In my little mind, I also thought we should give a great big thanks and a tip of the yarmulke to the millions of American men and women who fought against Hitler and Tojo and their many minions. Without these guys, a great many of whom are dead, and a helluva lot more are still wounded and maimed, we Jews would be ashes floating around eternity. Thank you.

Back at my condo, I met J., my former assistant, former full-on Val, now a saleswoman in the *schmatte* business. She went into her rap about life in Los Angeles for a single girl. She's broke all the time. She can't pay her bills. She has one boyfriend who loves her but she doesn't like him because he's too nice to her. She has another one who's really mean to her but she sort of likes him. She's been noticing that all the tough, mean young people she knows are mak-

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ing money, and the ones who are nice aren't making money. "Why can't I ever make any money?" she asked me. "Is it because I'm a Gentile?"

"Well," I said, "John D. Rockefeller was a Gentile. So was J. P. Morgan."

"Who was J. P. Morgan?" J. asked.

"He was a rich guy," I said. "Very rich indeed."

"Well, I just notice that Jewish people really pay attention to business, and that seems to be how they get rich."

"You notice that I'm Jewish and I'm not rich," I pointed out.

"Yes, but that's because you spend so much time with Trixie. Trixie can't pay you anything. If she could, you'd be rich, too."

Hmmm. Hmmm.

Monday

A call from my agent. Not one but two lavish auditions today. One is for the movie version of "Dennis the Menace." The other is for a miniseries called "Wild Palms," about a scary cult that uses psychiatrists and money to take over America. (Hasn't that happened already?)

The "Dennis the Menace" audition was in an ancient, prewar building with ornate plates for the elevator call buttons and an actual elevator operator running the lift. The casting company gets the space very, very cheap. Everyone in Los Angeles gets office space very cheap now. This is Houston-on-the-Pacific.

I waited with an older woman who had baked cookies for the people who were "reading" her. I also waited with an old-time actor who had to have his practical nurse help him into the reading room. Occasionally the old man would gasp and look wildly around the room. This is the future. If I'm lucky.

I read for my humble little part of nerdy boss, and the casting people laughed their heads off. "Wow, are you funny," they all said. But will I get the part? Don't hold your breath, Benjala.

I had to drive across town to Santa Monica to read for "Wild Palms," a six-hour mini being made by none other than Oliver Stone. I used to wonder about him, to put it mildly. If he gives me the part, he's been saved.

I read over my script as I waited in a cavernous empty room. A man came out and asked me if I would read some other lines. "Now this is a really big part. You would be one of the main villains," he said. "You would be an evil psychiatrist who acts like he's the hero's friend, but really betrays him. I love your work," he added.

I read my part "as best as I could." "Now, if you get this, you have to play love scenes with Angie Dickinson. Is that all right?" Or maybe he said Jill St. John. One of them.

"I hope there won't be any frontal nudity," I said.

The man laughed and I told him my rule of acting. No frontal nudity. No sidal nudity. No backal nudity. "I made this pledge to myself when I first entered the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art," I said, "in London, England."

But by then the man had walked away.

Still, I thought, wow and double wow. A major part. A starring role. This could be very major stuff. Good-bye to poverty and anonymity.

Hello, fame. Hello, monopoly rent.

I strolled down the street on a cloud. A homeless man came up next to me and asked me for a dollar. I gave him one.

Then another homeless person approached. Then another. The fourth one hit a dry hole. "I'm sorry," I said. "I guess I'm out of dollars."

"How about ten dollars?" he asked.

"I don't think so," I said.

"You probably are calling me 'nigger' in your head right now," he said, leaning towards me.

"No, I'm not," I said. "I was thinking about getting an acting role."

"Are you sure you're not calling me 'nigger' in your head?"

"I'm sure," I said. "You keep saying it, not me."

"All right," he said, and he walked away.

As I turned onto Ocean Boulevard, on foot, another homeless person shouted at me. "Ben," he said, "love your work."

Between there and my destination, a restaurant called "Ivy at the Shore," two more homeless people asked me for money. I was genuinely scared of what might happen if I said no. Still, I was out of ones. What a world. Really, what a world.

Thursday

Boo-hoo. I didn't get either part. Neither the evil shrink nor the nerdy boss. That's cruel. I can see why people think acting is destructive to the self. You go around town begging people to like you. It's like going down Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica asking people for money, only worse, since most people would rather pass over a dollar than like you. Besides, at every audition, there are a few dozen other people who also want to be liked. Only one can be liked. Guaranteed loss.

Morning in my little office in my basement in Malibu. I'm really proud of having my office in my house. Very non-extravagant. Never mind that I have lost on the house so far as much as I made in the first ten years out of law school. We'll forget that detail for now. I sometimes try to make a list of all the things I'm not extravagant about: clothes, furniture, and office space. Then the things I am extravagant about: cars, real estate, travel, dining, and gifts to blonde bad girls. Hmmm.

A foray into the world of self-obsession at my self-help group. "I think today I'm just going to surf and pretend that I'm a little kid," said a man who has made an eight-figure sum off stock swindling.

"I think today I'm just going to pretend that I'm a little girl and ride my horse up at the club all day and just take care of me," said a middle-aged woman who is the heir to a major oil fortune.

"Today, I think I'll just be the best me I can and not worry about whether my husband thinks I'm extravagant," said the wife of a businessman who's about to go into Chapter Eleven.

"I'm really down on myself today," said another woman who recently inherited some money from a relative. "I think I need a few days at Cottonwood Ranch, just to get a mental tune-up. My father says it's extravagant because it costs $500 a day, but I'm not going to let him bind me in shame."

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After lunch with a man from the group who often talks about suicide, I drive into town to prepare to take little Mr. Perfect to dinner. It's quite a drive, past the ocean for about thirty miles, and then through some of the ritziest real estate in America, and then into West Hollywood, with its huge throngs of gay men and women, all of whom always look sad to me, and then to my little apartment in the mighty Shoreham Towers.

To my shock, as I walked Trixie down the hall to my apartment, there was my beautiful but wistful neighbor, Dorothy, walking her dog, a Bouvet de Flandres, and limping noticeably. Dorothy, who has MS, is a stunning blonde woman of about 30 from a town in the Florida panhandle.

"I was just leaving you a note," she said, "thanking you for your card."

"It was my pleasure," I answered. "Everyone needs a card of the Nixon family from 1972." That's what I had sent her, and I meant what I said.

Dorothy came in with her dog, which immediately found an oriental rug and fell into a sound, snoring sleep while Trixie hovered next to me.

Dorothy sat on the sofa. I noticed that as she drank the Diet Cream Soda that I had given her, her hand trembled. It was her left hand. Her right hand was stationary on her lap.

"You're having a bad attack," I said.

"Yes," she said. "It's pretty bad. I'm trying to concentrate on not letting it get so bad that I have to go back into the hospital. I'm afraid that if I have to go back to the hospital, I'll lose my health insurance and probably my job, too. Plus, they'll put all those needles in my spine."

"Well, you had better just lie in bed and rest," I suggested. I puttered around on my deck. My huge bougainvillea was blooming, shooting pinkish red petals all over the window and the railing.

"Do you realize that I was just diagnosed two years ago," Dorothy said, "and now it's this bad? I have a fair number of days when I just don't want to get out of bed at all. Quite a few. I do though, and I go to work. What would I do if I couldn't work? I can barely pay my bills now."

"What would anyone do who's disabled and isn't rich?"

"Yes, well I'm not rich. I would get some little bit of long-term disability payment from my job, but it wouldn't be enough. And I guess there's something from Social Security, but that's not enough either, except to maybe live in a slum somewhere."

"You can move back to Florida and live with your parents."

Dorothy began to cry. "That would be great, wouldn't it?" she asked between sniffles. "To live in my basement room, with its old Sears bed, while my parents watched re-runs of 'The Dick Van Dyke Show.' While little by little I got to spend more and more of my time in a wheelchair. I think I'd rather throw myself off your balcony right now."

"I'd rather you didn't."

"You know," she said, "I came here and I was sure I was going to be a star. In the advertising business. I was never going to be so stupid as to try to be an actor, like you. No, that ad game. That was going to be the ticket. I knew I was pretty, and I knew I was smart, and I knew I was going to be a major factor in creative."

God save us from the things that we know just aren't so.

"I still remember when I drove into town and I could hear about fifty different radio stations, and I thought, 'Wow, I am really in the big time now.' I thought I was just going to be the biggest wheel in history. And all the boys were flocking around me, and I was going out with the top guys in my agency right away, and then I was going with a big agent and we were going to parties at movie stars' houses. And then I met you, so I knew at least one braino, and then the roof fell in."

"I think it fell in before that." I said. "At least now you consciously take care of yourself instead of consciously hurting yourself."

Dorothy looked at me angrily. "There's such a thing as being too truthful," she said.

"I'm sorry."

"Sometimes," she said after a long pause, "I look back on my life and I try to think what I would have done differently if I knew that I was going to have MS by the time I was 30."

"Not come to L.A., for starters," I said. "Stay where you know the ropes."

"Maybe," she said. "But most of all, I wouldn't have done so many things to hurt people. When I think of all the time

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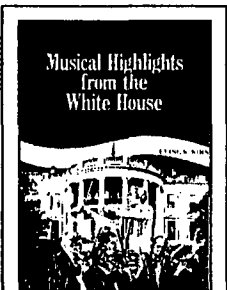

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I spent on guys who just wanted to exploit me because I was a blonde girl from the South, and how I hurt myself over them, I want to shriek. When I think of all the nice men I blew off just because they weren't mean and exciting, I feel sick. What if there's justice?"

Dorothy put down her Diet Cream Soda and started to stroke her leg. "Maybe that's what this is all about. Some kind of justice."

"I think we can be quite sure that on earth, there's no justice," I said. "Otherwise, how would we explain Ross Perot?"

After a short while, Dorothy left and I started to make a list of all the people I know in Los Angeles who are sick in one way or another. I am always tired. B. is always feverish. A. is always headachey. S. is always constipated. This one cannot get out of bed. That one cannot stop taking drugs. Is there no end to it? What makes people here so sick? Is it the smog? The endless sunshine? I read recently that sunlight can break down the body's immunities. Maybe it's the journey into self-obsession. "Hello, I'm Ben and I'm powerless over self-obsession."

Anyway, out to dinner with Mr. Wonderful and my Wife for Life (although she doesn't know it). We went to a Pizza Hut. As we waited for our plain cheese, Tommy asked me if he could go swimming in Mommy's pool after dinner.

"Absolutely not," I said. "It's far, far too late for you to go swimming. You will go home and go right to sleep."

The pizza man called my number and off I went to get my pizza. When I came back, Mommy was having an earnest conversation with young Adonis.

"He told me that he would make a really great deal with me," Mommy said. "He said that if I let him go swimming, he would go buy me a really great toy first thing in the morning."

"Did you really say that?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, all smiles.

"How are you going to pay for this present you were going to bribe us with so that you could do what you wanted?"

"You and Mommy will give me the money," he said. Young Milken.

Back at my apartment there was a message saying I was going to be offered the part in "Dennis the Menace" after all. Suddenly, I feel a lot better. Lots better. In the pink. ❐

Patriot Games

by Cathy Young

A letter from Ada T., the elderly music teacher at whose Moscow apartment I stayed for a week last November—and who certainly feels no nostalgia for the old regime—offers a none-too-happy view of present affairs: galloping prices, utter chaos (*"In one district of Moscow, people pay for electricity at the old rates, in another at the new ones . . ."*), and, "most frightening of all, the looming threat of fascism and civil war. Of course, this threat existed before, but now it's more real than ever."

This may be the result of an alarmist predisposition, but a front-page editorial in the *Literary Gazette* voices the same fears. The bizarre battles of the "democrats" and the "patriots" continue, with monarchists and Russian Orthodox joining hardline Communists and even some *ex*-democrats. If Russian idiom had a cliché comparable to "a long, hot summer," it would be cropping up all over the press.

On June 11, a group of demonstrators from the Workers' Russia movement gathered in front of the Ostankino TV tower, from which both national and Moscow programming is broadcast, for a daytime picket and a 6 p.m. rally permitted by the city government. The rally, about 3,000 strong, turned into an encampment of a few hundred people with tents, loudspeakers, a truck, red banners, and such posters as "Put Yeltsin in a Drunk Tank" and "Down With the Zionist Occupation!" (alleged Jewish domination of TV has long been a sore point with the "patriots"). The siege continued for days, with attempts by some especially zealous patriots to rush the police barriers and storm the studio; several policemen were beaten. The chief of studio security complained to *Argumenty i Fakty* that staffers entering and leaving the building were being made to walk a "gauntlet of shame" and called various names, including—if they were young women—"Bush's whores."

One of the demonstrators, N. Galkovskaya, a 60-year-old economist whose poster read, "CIA Strategy: Collapse of the USSR, Plunder of the Gold Reserves, Sex, AIDS," told *Argumenty i Fakty* that she was "allergic" to American programming. She wanted a return to "socialism and state planning," and also "something Soviet or Russian on TV, the way it used to be." (She named two popular singers of the 1970s, one of whom is Jewish and the other Azerbaijani.)

Formal demands included a daily hour of live, prime-time air time for the "opposition." (It is only fair to say that critics of the Yeltsin government, including those who worry about the preservation of *nomenklatura* privilege and the inadequacy of political reform, do *not* have enough access to the Russian media, TV in particular.) A survey on Russian TV showed 9 percent sympathetic to the demonstrators, while 42 percent were fully behind the state broadcasting company and the rest had no opinion.

On June 15, representatives of Russian TV and the Russian government met with a delegation of protesters, headed by one Viktor Anpilov, a Moscow City Council member and a leader in the Russian Communist Workers' party who, according to *Kommersant* (June 15-22), used to be a state TV correspondent in Nicaragua. Yegor Yakovlev, the head of

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Cathy Young, our regular Russian Presswatch columnist, is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

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Russian TV, told the delegates that he would set up a joint committee to ensure representation for all political viewpoints if the tent city and the loudspeakers were removed, but the uncompromising patriots would have none of that.

On the next day, Moscow's new mayor Yuri Luzhkov—an old-time apparatchik and nemesis of free-market reformers in his capacity as deputy mayor under Gavriil Popov, who resigned in May—denounced the talks as a cave-in and gave orders to get rid of the encampment. In the early morning hours of June 17, the riot police—the very same "black berets" who used truncheons to disperse anti-Communist demonstrators—chased the "patriots" away from the TV tower without much violence, confiscating seventeen tents, one truck, and a number of posters.

These events were quite a jolt for the Russian democratic press; there were cries of lawlessness and anarchy. In *Ogonyok*, former editor-in-chief Vitaly Korotich wrote an emotional column comparing the Ostankino siege to the seizure of the Vilnius television tower by Soviet troops in January 1991, and using such words as "takeover" and "occupation" to describe the actions of the "patriots." In *Izvestia*, Luzhkov defended the dispersal of the demonstrators, invoking the fact that their spoken and written slogans "insulted the honor and dignity of the President of the Russian Federation."

The siege of Ostankino was not the only show of force by Russia's "new right." The Russian National Congress met in Moscow on June 14-15. The presidium included the usual mix of suspects: Slavophile, anti-urban, conservative Christian writers Valentin Rasputin and Vasily Belov; KGB general Aleksandr Sterligov; Gen. Albert Makashov, who campaigned against Yeltsin in 1991 on a platform of preserving the Communist Soviet empire; another passionate defender of the defunct empire, former Soviet parliament member Sazhi Umalatova; mathematician, former Solzhenitsyn coauthor and dissident, more recently author of the anti-Semitic tract *Russophobia* Igor Shafarevich; and the notorious TV personality Aleksandr Nevzorov.

More shocking was the appearance in this crowd of Yuri Vlasov, a highly respected, veteran member of the democratic movement. Vlasov's is a truly sad case: a champion weight lifter in the 1960s, he was elected to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies under Gorbachev and made a stunning televised speech at the first Congress in May 1989 openly and passionately denouncing the KGB. After that, Vlasov, who has the mournful and bearded look of a Russian prophet, remained a faithful member of the democratic movement—until recently.

Izvestia commentator Aleksei Kiva remarked (June 16) that "some mentally unstable democrats can't bear the tensions of the transition period, and so they either get out of the game . . . or go over to the other side." The implication that people of politically incorrect views must be mentally unhinged has an unpleasant echo of the *ancien régime*, but some of Vlasov's recent pronouncements do suggest a less than sound mind. His June 11 article in *Pravda*, of all places, "Whose Children Are We?" is a long rant filled with such exclamations as "A darkness has set over the Russian land" and "We are the most disgraceful generation of Russians."

The central, endlessly restated point of this idiosyncratic essay is that without a strong Russian state, the Russians will cease to be a "people" and turn into a mere "population," to be exploited, abused, plundered, raped, and spit upon by foreigners and domestic "predators." And that is particularly outrageous, given that "we were the ones who gave the world a model of human relations in which other things besides money, the passion for consumption, the instincts of reproduction and profit . . . exist and matter: love of humanity, soul, self-sacrifice for a just cause." Russia remains "perhaps the only country that has not completely succumbed to consumerism, lechery, and contempt for poverty."

And so it goes. Bolshevism was undoubtedly a tragedy, he says, but capitalism in Russia has proved to be a great evil too. Vlasov urges all Russians to stand together and save the country, leaving aside the differences between "right and left, Communists and constitutional democrats," and ominously reminds the country's new rulers that they are toying with a people which "has the unique experience (via schooling and tradition) of Bolshevik revolution."

In a June 17 column in the Moscow daily *Kuranty*, political commentator Leonid Radzikhovsky was disconcerted at the sight of the well-known filmmaker Stanislav Govorukhin, author of the acclaimed anti-Communist documentaries *This Is No Way to Live* (1990) and *The Russia We Lost* (1992), among those in attendance at the Russian National Congress. It is not that Radzikhovsky is an ardent fan of the director's; rather that the presence of people like Govorukhin (whose publicly expressed concerns—crime, pornography, etc.—seem far closer to a Western-style social conservatism than to any sort of radical nationalism) indicates the growing legitimacy of neo-fascism. "I think Govorukhin is a very good barometer," writes Radzikhovsky:

> He's no fanatic. He turns—whether sincerely or cynically, doesn't matter—the way he "thinks" the masses are turning. And I trust his intuition more than I do opinion polls. . . . I have been an optimist because I believed in common sense, in the public's instinct for self-preservation. But what if I don't understand anything while Govorukhin has gauged the situation accurately and rushed to join those whom the wave is sweeping to the top?

If anyone doubts that these are strange times in Russia, consider that one of the most prominent exponents of the new wave of "red-and-brown" Russian nationalism, the novelist and poet Eduard Limonov, is not only an émigré currently residing in Paris but a man whose morals should be rather shocking to his austere ideological brethren. His biggest claim to fame, before he put his pen in the service of a greater cause, was the 1979 autobiographical novel *It's Me, Eddie*. It chronicles the author's simultaneous disillusionment with women and with bourgeois society after coming to America and being abandoned by his wife. (Eddie expresses his contempt for both by having sex with a black male vagrant in an empty Manhattan parking lot.)

Limonov's latest literary effort appeared in June in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*—a nearly full-page article titled "A Russian Nationalist Manifesto," which holds that Russian nationalism embraces the legacy of both Peter the Great and Lenin and rejects the "unconstitutional destruction of the USSR"; that what is good for the state is good for the individual; and, most ominously, that Russia must unite with the Islamic world against the West, which is destroying Russia with the superweapon of "democracy" and "human rights." ❐

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Batting Around

by James Bowman

Let's start, this time, with the inevitable Movie of the Month. Tim Burton's *Batman Returns* is less impressive visually than the *Batman* of 1989, but it has interesting things to say on serious subjects, including that of sexual identity. At the end of the film Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) says to Batman (Michael Keaton): "I'd love to come home and live with you in your castle"—pause—"It's just that I couldn't live with myself." She then proceeds to execute the evil Max Shreck (Christopher Walken) with an electric kiss that is meant to seem both a condign punishment for his sexism and an allusion to the recognition line between Batman and Catwoman: "Mistletoe is deadly if you eat it; a kiss can be even deadlier if you mean it."

Of course, Catwoman has nine lives—we really are into mythic archetypes here—so the kiss does not kill *her*, and the deadliness she fears in a meaningful kiss is not electricity but love and consequent loss of identity. Having emerged out of the mousy little secretary, Selina Kyle, Catwoman is not about to become a mere "appendage" (as her psychobabbling ex-boyfriend puts it) of someone else. Not even Batman. The traditional-feminine appears to her as only another grotesque disguise that she put off when she chose to put on her cat suit, trashed all the girlish stuff in her apartment, and went looking for revenge against men.

Yet Tim Burton is not giving us the Hollywood party line on women's toughness and independence. Catwoman's feline fanaticism is tinged with ambiguity, which is why she is afraid of a kiss from Batman. At one point she says: "He makes me feel the way I hope I really am." But then she quickly retreats from this flirtation with an identity that is not self-determined and depends on being loved by a man. Her vulnerability appears again when she and Bruce Wayne appear at a fancy dress party where they are the only people not in disguise. "I'm tired of wearing masks," she says as the sexual chemistry begins to cook.

But the mask cannot be removed. Batman's come-on line to her at the end—"We're just the same: split down the middle"—is true, but also the reason why they can't get together. Neither the Catwoman nor the would-be Batwoman can be merged into a single identity. There is just the hint of tragedy about this, just the suggestion that the new feminist world splits all women down the middle. Even Max Shreck, who is by no means a mere one-dimensional villain, is allowed to voice a not altogether villainous doubt about the moral "disease" abroad which "changes happy homemakers into catwomen."

I don't think that it is mere fancy on my part to see this as a sign of Hollywood's new and not very robust longings for more traditional, "family" values. In *Batman Returns*, both Batman and the Penguin (Danny DeVito) are orphans, lonely figures who share in the pathos of not belonging. When DeVito tries to "reemerge" from the sewers where his parents dumped him at birth, he is rebuffed and retreats to the makeshift family of "my beloved penguins." By contrast, Max Shreck's devotion to his son, to save whom he volunteers to be submerged in sewage up to the eyeballs, is as rare here as his fabulous wealth. Love, marriage, and families in the film seem to be regarded with a nostalgic longing usually reserved for the unattainable.

There was no such wistful ambiguity about last summer's big hit, *Thelma and Louise*, which, like Catwoman, embodied a feminist revenge fantasy while insisting that girls, too, could be the heroes of a picaresque adventure. But once such Tough Women have cleansed their cinematic world of annoyances, they may begin to wonder what is the point of being women at all. Given the constraints of the feminist consensus, which will not allow women to be depicted as docile homebodies except in a negative context, *Batman Returns* sets a pattern for bringing back a form of traditional femininity that other films are able to some extent to follow. The trick is to set the film in a world other than this one, or in the past, or else to try for subtlety and a tragic mood by hinting at possibilities that remain more or less unfulfilled.

There is nothing subtle about Ralph Bakshi's *Cool World*. It combines an exotic setting—the cartoon world pioneered by *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*—and a partial time-transplant, since it begins in the 1940s and in style owes a lot to the *film noir* of the period. The cartoon character Holli Would (played by Kim Basinger when she comes alive) displays a grotesque femininity that resembles a Hugh Hefner fantasy of the 1950s and shows why feminism grew up in the following decade. The phallic imagery of "the spike of power," by which the cartoon characters are able to translate themselves into such reality as the film is able to pretend to be in touch with, must have got past the feminist censors only as part of such obvious fantasy. The cartoons cling to unreality because in cartoonland none of life's disasters or losses is permanent, but the same fantasy world seems an appropriate resting place for such an old-time sex kitten as Holli Would.

Although its sexual imagery is repellent, *Cool World* at least offers a version of the feminine that is not a mere replica-

James Bowman, The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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tion of the masculine, and this seems to be a particularly difficult thing for Hollywood to do at the moment. Another stab at it comes in *A Stranger Among Us*, in which Melanie Griffith plays a tough-as-nails New York cop who goes undercover among some Hasidic Jews. The preposterousness of the film's premise is almost equal to that of *Shining Through*, in which Miss Griffith played a tough-as-nails spy. I think the attraction of miscasting an obvious pussy-cat like her in roles such as these is that the director doesn't have to work to show that she retains a feminine quality.

The downside is that no one can believe in her as the killer dame. But then, no one really believes in this new kind of karate-kicking, high-caliber-weapon-packing killer dame anyway. Putting into the role someone like Melanie Griffith instead of, say, Rene Russo, the killer dame of *Lethal Weapon 3*, and allowing her to display lots of skin is Hollywood's way of giving its audience a sly ironic wink. Or so I prefer to think. It could be just stupidity. Certainly there is not much else ironic about *A Stranger Among Us*.

It has all the usual feminist accoutrements, including a final scene in which the pacific man (Eric Thal) must kill the bad girl and then keel over in horror while Miss Griffith, whose criminal victims are popped off with the same insouciance that her buttons are, looks on in scorn. Yet the close-knit family life of the Hasidim is allowed to make its impression on her and she begins to doubt the wisdom of her way of life, with its casual sex and no commitments. She is even allowed to be impressed by Thal's sister's telling her that she wants to be a wife and mother because nothing could be more important.

Only a heavy-ethnic character can get away with saying something like that, of course, but the standard-issue Career Girl/Tough Woman played by Griffith is definitely affected by this family orientation. In the end she turns down a colleague's offer of two weeks in Aruba and says that she is waiting for her destined man.

It is a popular theme. In *Boomerang* and *Man Trouble* improbable matches are made and rogue men (Eddie Murphy in the former and Jack Nicholson in the latter) are tamed by the love of a good woman. Even in *Lethal Weapon 3* the beautiful and dangerous Ms. Russo is clearly the woman destined for Mel Gibson. Monogamy is in, it seems.

The sugary *Prelude to a Kiss* tries to make us love it, too. A young bride (Meg Ryan) exchanges souls with an old man (Sydney Walker) on her wedding day, making it necessary for her bridegroom (Alec Baldwin) first to discover the fact and then to switch them back. Along the way she unlearns her callow certainty that "the world is a really terrible place" and decides to have kids after all. The whole thing is silly in the extreme, but its Cartesian soul/body dualism makes the point that it is really the soul that we love when we love. Merely physical accidents, either of youth and beauty or age and ugliness are just that—which would be a more uplifting notion if Ryan and Baldwin were not themselves very attractive actors who

end up together just as they would have done in any old-time Hollywood movie.

It is good they suggest that permanent relationships are better than temporary liaisons, but none of these films really comes to terms with the problem posed by marriage in a post-feminist world: that men and women are obstinately different. That is what Hollywood is terrified of saying. Melanie Griffith in *A Stranger Among Us* fights and shoots and does everything else like a man; the souls of the old man and the young girl in *Prelude to a Kiss* are completely interchangeable; Eddie Murphy in *Boomerang* learns his lesson in love from a sexually predatory female boss who treats him in the same way as he treated all the girls he slept with before.

Yet a look at male-female differences *does* come this month, and from a very surprising source. Penny Marshall's *A League of Their Own* promised to be another self-congratulatory exercise in Hollywood feminism—read retrospectively into the 1940s. See? Girls can play baseball too, just like guys! There is a lot of the Tough Woman myth in the picture, together with a lot of schmaltzy feminism, as the girls get together forty years later to remind themselves of what heroines they were. But there is also a subtle and implicit recognition that there are reasons why the major leagues are all male.

All the way through, Tom Hanks, as the washed up player who manages the girls' team, keeps insisting that they're not ballplayers, they're girls, dammit, and telling them, for example, that "there's no crying in baseball." Predictably, Hanks comes out of his alcoholic stupor for long enough to recognize that the girls are ballplayers after all—except that even as this realization is dawning on him, the more perceptive in the audience are realizing that he was right all along: they're *not* ballplayers.

Geena Davis (she of *Thelma and Louise*) plays the catcher, whose natural ability so impresses Hanks that he is prepared to proclaim her a real ballplayer. But in the end she utters the ultimate heresy, the thing that all women believe but that all men know is untrue: "It's only a game." Moreover, she has a fierce rivalry with her sister, a pitcher (Lori Petty), who always feels upstaged by her. In the heat of battle on the diamond, Miss Davis shows no partiality to her sister, advising the manager that it's time to pull her out towards the end of a hard-fought game when she doesn't want to go. But when the sister is traded and the whole season comes down to Geena Davis's having to tag her out at home plate, she drops the ball deliberately.

Aha! Typical woman! The personal relationship with her sister, requiring that the latter should beat her for once in order to escape from her shadow, is more important than winning. Likewise, though she enjoys the game, there is never any doubt in her mind that it is time to go back to the farm and play the dutiful wife when her husband comes home from the war. Perhaps only a woman director could get away with saying this—and in the context of what is otherwise a feminist festival. Certainly it raises troubling questions that no one in politicized Hollywood is equipped to answer and few can bear to listen to. ❐

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EVELYN WAUGH: THE LATER YEARS 1939-1966

Martin Stannard

W.W. Norton/503 pages/$25.95

reviewed by STUART REID

Evelyn Arthur St. John Waugh was famous for so many things—his drunkenness, his snobbery, his clown's wardrobe, *Brideshead Revisited*—that it is sometimes possible to forget that he was also a great prose writer, possibly the greatest England has produced this century. To most people, Waugh is much more than the sum of his books: he is a way of life, an attitude, a fashion statement, a style guide.

And has been for more than thirty years. In the summer of 1958 Waugh visited Ampleforth College, in north Yorkshire, where I was then a 15-year-old schoolboy. The word went round that the Great Man was down on the Penance Walk with one of the better-connected monks. We immediately abandoned the radio in the corner of St. Oswald's Common Room (tuned to the American Forces Network) to look out the window. There below us, unless I am imagining all this, was the diminutive Waugh, puce of face, terrible of eye, with an ear trumpet tilted aggressively towards the respectfully lowered head of his black-robed companion. Wow! It was as though the Big Bopper himself had just dropped in, as, in a way, he had. There was, to be sure, nothing of the long-necked goose about Waugh, but we knew he was a class act all the same. He made it intellectually and socially smart to be an RC.

Religion came into it, too, I suppose. We were triumphalists, and insufferably smug. There seemed no chance to us then that Waugh's world would ever yield to change. But as he himself saw, it *would* yield, was yielding; the liturgical vandals were already marching on Rome. Yet Waugh's own influence—as distinct from the influence of the things he loved (such as the Church) and the things he invented (such as country-house Catholicism)—grew stronger by the day; and it now extends far beyond Catholic circles. The snobberies and taboos of English society remain firmly rooted in the prejudices Waugh championed. For example, such was the fierceness of his hostility to Non-U (non-upper-class) words—among them "toilet," "perspire," "serviette"—that even today, as Jilly Cooper has observed, aspiring upper-class mothers would rather their children came home from school saying "f---" than "toilet."

Waugh had a horror of genteelisms, perhaps because there was something genteel about his own background. He was brought up in Golders Green, a middle-class Jewish suburb in North London. He was ashamed of his father, a publisher, less ashamed of his mother, a relative of Lord Cockburn of Cockpen. He was a humbug, and at times grotesquely selfish and cruel. He neglected his wife. His son James said that life with him was "utter hell." It was not all warts, though. Waugh was generous, especially to the Jesuits and Poor Clares and to pals down on their luck. He was widely loved. His daughter Meg doted on him and he on her, which was hard cheese on poor James.

Martin Stannard does not entirely approve of Waugh, but then neither does anyone in his right mind. That said, the second volume of his biography (the first, published in 1986, covered the years to 1939), is perhaps a little pious at times. Stannard is impatient with Waugh's politics and snobbery, but his book is all the better for being in some measure hostile: there has been far too much toadying to Waugh in recent years, and Stannard, who teaches English at a provincial university, has upset what one might call the politically correct conservatives; the man has mocked the Master. His book is, however, just, and ultimately sympathetic. It is written with grace, wit, and authority, and covers what, to me, is Waugh's most interesting period: the years after the "People's War," when, in spite of decline and despair, he hurled energetic abuse at the "so-called twentieth century" and at (among others) Churchill, Stalin, Tito, and Eden. Sometimes the abuse was knockabout, as when it was delivered at the bar of White's; sometimes it was sublimely comic, as when it appeared in *The Sword of Honour* trilogy, Waugh's finest achievement after *A Handful of Dust*.

For Waugh, as for Guy Crouchback, World War II began as a crusade for civilization, a battle against Nazism and Nazism's ally, Communism; it ended with civilization retreating in the face of Communism and liberalism. After the Russians become our allies, Waugh did not rejoice at Allied victories; on the contrary, he viewed them with profound misgivings. He was, for example, almost indifferent to the outcome of the Battle of the Bulge. Whoever won, he felt, Europe was already lost.

He was right, of course, although it is unlikely that he would have had a better war if he had continued to believe in the cause. He was a recklessly brave soldier, but a useless officer. He was too much of an anarchist for the military life. Once, unable to control his boredom during a lecture, he asked whether it was true that "in the Romanian Army no one beneath the rank of Major is permitted to use lipstick." He spent a week getting publicly drunk at White's and then wondered why he was not asked to lead men into battle. He blamed others for his own failures. He was bloody-minded to a fault. Rebuked by his CO for being drunk in the mess one evening, he replied that he "could not change the habits of a lifetime to suit a whim of his."

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He no more belonged in the army than he did among the aristocracy. He was an artist and an aesthete, not an officer and gentleman. He could not be house-trained. "He craved membership of clubs," Stannard writes, "was fascinated by their etiquette and their 'language,' observed them with a scrupulousness approaching lunacy, but was too intelligently disruptive (or just plain rude) not to smash up the furniture now and again." He was a contrary sod. In spite of his hatred of socialism he took some satisfaction in 1945 from the defeat of Churchill's Conservative party at the hands of Clement Attlee's Labour party. He hated the Conservatives as only a true conservative can. (How contemptuous he would have been of Mrs. Thatcher and her Manchester school liberalism. Yet Tories in general, and Thatcherites in particular, claim Waugh as one of their own, just as, even more ludicrously, they claim George Orwell.)

If there was something heroic about Waugh's lone stand against the modern world, there was also something absurd about it, and tiresome. The reactionary position is untenable, and even as a joke it becomes a bore. Waugh's politics could be as deranged as his snobbery. Who these days, for example, gives a damn about Hooper? (Who, for that matter, can read the death of Lord Marchmain without sniggering?) There was much in Waugh that was, to use Stannard's description of *Brideshead*, "yellow with hatred and self-pity." Yet he was aware of his own yellow hatreds, and played on his own absurdities. He liked to alarm decent folk (agnostics, Anglicans, Americans), which is why, for example, during Lent he would take scales with him to restaurants and ostentatiously weigh his food, lest he take a gram more fish than the fasting laws allowed.

Waugh had no trouble with the rubrics, but he had great difficulty in establishing a coherent spiritual life. He once wrote that to aim for anything less than sanctity was not to aim at all, but he couldn't have hit a barn door with a rosary. The Christian duty to be charitable and (though in moderation) sober seems to have defeated him; he was powerless to control himself, especially when prudence demanded that he do so. His life was littered with failed resolutions and apology notes. In 1953, having quarreled with *Life*, he attended a party given by the magazine in London. "I had decided to go as a means of making friends with them," he recorded in his diary. "I don't think I can have achieved my object. . . . No memories of the evening."

Waugh's misbehavior on this occasion may have had something to do with the fact that *Life* was an American publication. Waugh had what we might today call an "attitude problem" towards Americans. He could never quite persuade himself that they were from the same gene pool as the Europeans. When he visited California in 1947, he went to a party at Louis B. Mayer's house and, surveying its gaudy luxury, declared sweetly: "How wise you Americans are to eschew all ostentation and lead such simple, wholesome lives! This really is delightful. Who'd ever want to live in the main house when he could have this charming gatehouse instead."

Yet it would not be entirely right to call Waugh anti-American. He did not want *The Loved One* to be published behind the Iron Curtain because he feared it would encourage hostility to the United States. It is true that he was not best pleased when his eldest daughter married an American and he was always irritated by American*ism*—of Randolph Churchill, in Yugoslavia in 1944, he wrote: "[His] American slang, his coughing and farting make him a poor companion in wet weather." But he nonetheless championed the anti-Communist United States of the 1940s, seeing it as the guardian of monasticism, even as a defender of the faith.

Waugh's enthusiasm for what he called "religious Yanks" was inspired by Thomas Merton. He edited *The Seven Story Mountain* for the English market and wrote a fulsome (if patronizing) foreword. It's not easy to see quite who the joke is on all these years later. Merton's spiritual journey from the Trappist ascetic of Kentucky to the bedenimed anti-war hippie who electrocuted himself at an ecumenical gig in Bangkok in 1968 is one that has given rise to much earnest reflection. What was going down here? What was the karma? The only certain lesson it leaves us with is that one should never mess with a faulty fan after taking a shower. Merton, at any rate, was one manifestation of the future of American monasticism, and it was a future that, when it arrived, must have appalled Waugh.

By the time he reached his late fifties, Waugh was an old man, and a sad one. He was full of fear: not of death, which he longed for, but of becoming a bore, alas with some reason. He was alone in White's one night in March 1962 when a member asked him why he was on his own. →

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"Because no one wants to speak to me," said Waugh.

"I can tell you exactly why," said the man. "Because you sit there on your arse looking like a stuck pig."

Waugh also feared that he would lose his faith. The Vatican Council, the *agape* that gave the sixties a kick-start, depressed him deeply. He was particularly unhappy about the destruction of the Latin (more accurately, Tridentine) Mass, and in his diary for Easter 1964 wrote what was for many a perfect evocation of the ancient rite:

> When I first came into the Church [he converted in 1930] I was drawn, not by splendid ceremonies but by the spectacle of the priest as craftsman. He had an important job to do which none but he was qualified for. He and his apprentice stumped up to the altar with their tools and set to work without a glance to those behind them, still less with any intention to make a personal impression on them.

Perhaps the Vatican Council was Waugh's penance; perhaps it was the penance of the whole Church. There must be some explanation for it. "The story of Waugh's later life," writes Stannard, "is the story of his agonised spiritual quest towards compassion and contrition." He would have found the quest easier if the Church had left him with the familiar tools. As it is, fear of apostasy was compounded by decay and debilitation. The last entries in Stannard's index under "Waugh, Evelyn" tell the story: "Health decline; enquiries about not attending Mass; teeth removed; opposes liturgical changes; religious depression; death and tributes; requiem and burial; will."

Still, let's not feel sorry for him. Death came, obligingly, like a thief in the night; in fact, at lunchtime on Easter Day 1966. His friend Philip Caraman, SJ, had said Mass in the old rite at the local church, and after returning home Waugh was felled by a massive stroke. It was a death that dreams are made of: fast, painless, and full of grace. The only thing Waugh might not have liked about it was that it happened not in the library or in the rose garden but in the toilet. ❐

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THE END OF EQUALITY

Mickey Kaus

Basic Books (A New Republic Book)/293 pages/$25

reviewed by FRED SIEGEL

With *The End of Equality*, Mickey Kaus has drafted the bravest and the most foolish of the neoliberal designs for modernizing American liberalism. Like his mentor Charley Peters of the *Washington Monthly*, he wants to encourage both entrepreneurship and community. Like Robert Reich in *The Wealth of Nations*, he recognizes the regressive redistributional effects of a globalized economy and proposes a "new nationalism" as the antidote. But Kaus is braver in his willingness to confront governments' inability to equalize income and more forthright in recognizing liberal responsibility for fostering the underclass. He's more wild-eyed in his schemes for a Rousseau-like revival of American nationalism at a time when the United States is less and less a nation-state.

By openly attacking the idols of his own liberal tribe, Kaus is already drawing widespread attention. For Kaus, the market will and should reign supreme in the economic sphere. Kaus aims his sharpest shafts at "Money Liberals," people who assume that questions of values and individual character, particularly as they pertain to the underclass, can either be ignored or overcome by taxes and transfer payments. It's not that Kaus opposes a progressive tax code. It's not that he's defending the Social Security tax that unfairly drains the young and the middle class. Rather he thinks that fairness is finally futile—a debatable point.

Unlike conventional liberals, though, Kaus recognizes that the trend toward greater inequality and a shrinking middle class "began around 1970," well before Reagan recaptured the White House for right-wing Republicanism. Had he looked abroad he might have also noted that the trend toward income inequality has accelerated across the industrialized world. Examining the various explanations, he suggests that the "bad jobs thesis"—the notion that inequality is a product of the low-level, unskilled, and often part-time jobs created under Reagan—fails to explain why "money inequality appears to have grown among full-time workers" as well. Nor was it primarily a matter of tax policy, since pre-tax income shows the same inegalitarian trends. Nor is the phenomenon temporary, a product of "the pig in the python" problem produced by the baby boomer bulge entering the work force in the 1970s.

What, then, caused the growing gap between rich and poor? Kaus ignores the impact of a largely unskilled immigration, and the fraying of the American family. "The empirical evidence is in," says the *Washington Post*'s Paul Taylor. "When marriage atrophies, so does fatherhood and so does society." Gordon Green of the Census Bureau has found that changes in household structure—the increasing number of people who are single or divorced—explains half the growth in income inequality over the past twenty years: families without fathers are six times more likely to be poor.

Instead, Kaus gives two other answers. First and most powerfully, he argues that the internationalization of the American economy, the increasing percentage of domestic goods subject to foreign competition, has broken down the protective barriers that made it possible to pay workers near-monopoly-level wages. Thus while unskilled workers no longer shielded from foreign competition have seen their wages erode markedly, the talented tenth, those who have businesses around the world bidding for their brain power have seen their salaries rise starkly. But the change is more than economic: the rise of radical individualism on the left and the right has eroded the solidaristic mechanisms "that once prevented the most talented members of a skilled trade from extracting their full measure of worth." The process has been most visible in baseball, where free agency has undermined team solidarity but enriched once obscure athletes beyond their wildest dreams.

Kaus fears not economic but social inequality, the inequality Orwell wrote of when he described the lower orders in Britain as unable to look its "betters" in the eye. In the smug superiority of today's test-taking classes, Kaus sees the dangers of a meritocratic future in which the cultural classes will be set off from each other in a sharply terraced inequality. Free trade, suggests Kaus has produced the danger of a brain-based elitism, in which those who are the most highly paid think of themselves as not only wealthier but also more worthy. Correspondingly, in what Kaus calls "the fairness trap," the more the economy operates free of social prejudice, the more it operates on true merit, "the more the losers will tend to feel that they deserve to lose . . ."

The logic is impeccable, but the problem is nothing new. The perceived identity of success and virtue was at the core of what Max Weber described as the cultural engine of capitalism, the "Protestant ethic." And the only evidence Kaus can point to is assortive mating, the tendency for high-income, high-IQ couples to mate. But, then, of course their children are to regress toward the mean.

It's surprising that Kaus makes no reference to Michael Young's influential late-fifties fable, *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870-2033*. Young's book, required reading for several generations of college students, describes how a feminist revolt led by the wives of scientists overturns a meritocratic "utopia" by attacking the mathematical measures of objectivity that meritocrats had depended on. Young was prescient. Kaus doesn't mention the anti-meritocratic tendencies set off by the civil rights and feminist movements. In American culture the "losers," as the Los Angeles riots make more than clear, don't necessarily take their losses lying down.

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Instead they act on their anger, or explain it away in terms of conspiracy theories designed to show that objectivity is just another mask for power.

"Exact thinking . . . or mastery of something," explains a spokesperson for the American Association of University Women is a danger to our "relationship with the invisible elements of the universe." In a period when some of our top schools of education are teaching that math is a matter of "self-concepts," and Pennsylvania is replacing grades with "learning outcomes" for fear of damaging the self-esteem of poor students, a far better case can be made that we're sinking into the swamps of an anti-meritocratic subjectivity.

Government's inability to eliminate extreme inequality, argues Kaus, must be counterbalanced by an interventionist civic liberalism, in which government "democratizes life instead of the tax tables." Now that the collapse of Communism should have convinced most everyone that capitalism is here to stay, liberals, leaning on Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice*, should "try to restrict the spheres of life in which money matters." Having decided that the passion for money is unconstrainable, he sets out to purge us of any other anti-public passions.

"For civic liberals," he says "the overriding goal is to mix the classes." Kaus, who would have done well to have read Madison's implicit critiques of Rousseau, proposes to "beat the selfishness out of us" in three stages. The first is a rehash of the now-familiar neoliberal arguments for both the draft and "the draft in a weaker dose"—mandatory national service. A draft, Kaus argues, even if the military continues to contract "would do more to promote social equality than all the 'transfer payments' liberals might conceivably legislate." Second, he argues that cities are central to our civic life, but that we can't restore our cities until we undo "the perverse degradation of public life" imposed by the underclass. Where Robert Reich writes simplistically of the rich "seceding from the cities," Kaus sees how the underclass has driven out much of the remaining urban middle class by itself seceding from middle-class values.

The solution to the underclass problem is, for Kaus, the key to our secular salvation. By re-establishing the work ethic for the lumpens, he proposes to re-establish it for the country as a whole. Evoking the lost legacy of New Deal solidarity, he quotes FDR's 1935 State of the Union speech, the founding document of the welfare state, on how "dependence on relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fibre." In the emerging fight over the underclass—a fight that is not between liberals and conservatives but between paternalists and libertarians—Kaus uses FDR to line up with the paternalistic Lawrence Mead.

For Kaus, liberalism's PAWEWTH, its "point after which everything went to hell," was the moment in the sixties when "money liberalism" lined up "on the side of welfare rather than work." Committed in the name of compassion to expanding social benefits, liberals "tried to eliminate the perverse incentives of welfare by broadening its coverage." They failed. Welfare served to anchor the poor to the imploding economy of the inner cities, while other Americans responded to changing regional incentives by moving to where the jobs were.

Sidestepping the certain opposition of both the ACLU and black nationalists, Kaus argues that you have "to unplug welfare, the lumpen culture's life support system," by replacing welfare with guaranteed work. Like Charles Murray he wants to eliminate welfare, but unlike Murray he wants the government to guarantee WPA-style jobs in a frank effort to "acculturate" the underclass. "A neo-WPA would have to learn to work with the dregs of the labor market." Part of the program would have to be "relatively authoritarian, even a little bit militaristic." Like Bill Bennett, he suggests society will have to construct "new" institutions—such as orphanages for the children whose parents fail them.

Kaus paints a pretty picture. WPA-style jobs would be open to everyone and would thus have no perverse anti-family incentives. "Once work is the norm, and the subsidy of AFDC has been removed, the natural incentives toward the formation of a two-parent family will reassert themselves." And once the swamps of underclass pathology are drained, civic life in the city and thus the country will once again re-emerge for both blacks and whites. "With a neo-WPA maintaining highways, schools, playgrounds, and subways, with libraries open every evening and streets cleaned twice a day, we would have a common life more people would find worth reclaiming."

Parts of this Frank Capra–like tableau are so appealing that Bill Clinton and some of his aides have begun quoting Kaus virtually verbatim. But before Kaus can be convincing, he has to explain how a new neo-WPA will fare better in the hands of competing interests than the Great Society version which lost its focus on productive work and became a tool of the theatrical politics of "community development." Kaus tells us that the public employee unions are sure to be an obstacle, but he doesn't tell us how the problem is to be circumvented. Nor does he explain how, without the sense of national emergency which empowered the New Deal, he's going to turn parochial city governments into agencies of public purpose.

In a revealing passage near the conclusion, Kaus confesses that his ultimate aim for "civic liberalism" is a "public sphere [which] will eventually have the sort of primacy to which religions have aspired." Kaus the policy pro is, it turns out, a seeker after the feelings of fraternity shattered in the 1960s by the nihilism born of the marriage of upper-middle-class romanticism and ghetto violence. His quest for redemption through work is nothing less than a neo-Protestant scheme to reharness the emotionalism of the vacuously hip middle class and the lost souls of the cities to a new vision of American nationality.

There is, however, no going back. Kaus's vision, while inspiring, is more a testament to the emotional emptiness of modernity than a guide for the future. The New Deal solidarity he takes as a benchmark was the exception to the broad sweep of American history. It was based on both a widely shared and deeply held nationalism, impossible under the conditions of contemporary multicultism, and a sense of Protestant rectitude imparted by the Bryanite wing of the Democratic party but inconceivable in the age of therapeutic religion. We *are* returning to the past, but by way of a global economy—to a pre–New Deal past, to a nation in which loosely connected states and special interests make their way in the world independent of either a shared vision or a guiding governmental authority. ❐

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WITH REAGAN: THE INSIDE STORY

Edwin Meese III

Regnery Gateway/362 pages/$24.95

reviewed by JOHN VON KANNON

A wise Milwaukee businessman once told me why Tommy Thompson was a much better governor of Wisconsin than his predecessor Pat Lucey. "I like Pat. He's a good friend. But he wasn't a very good governor. He thought he had to understand everything about state government, and then work the process. Tommy Thompson knows that the first role of a governor is to set policies. His second role is to be the main cheerleader for those policies." My friend's interpretation, however, is open to a glib and persuasive criticism: Shouldn't our leaders know all the details?

That such criticism has been leveled so relentlessly at Ronald Reagan is what prompted former attorney general Edwin Meese to write *With Reagan*. After a constant barrage from the left—combined with an almost absolute silence from the Bush White House—we seem to have forgotten how rotten things were in the 1970s, and how dramatically they improved in the 1980s, and Meese sets out to make that plain. He reminds us of 1979: 13.5 percent inflation, a 21.5 percent prime rate, high unemployment, a crippling tax burden, gasoline shortages, and a general national malaise. The 1980s, by contrast, witnessed the longest peacetime expansion in America's history, with *growth* under Reagan equalling the *entire economy of Germany*. The thousands of nuclear weapons that in 1979 were pointed at us from a hostile power now belong—thanks to Reagan's defense buildup—to a country that is neither hostile nor powerful. The Reagan presidency, in the phrase of Washington analyst Burton Yale Pines, "repealed the 1970s."

The case should be an open-and-shut one, but *With Reagan* will not get rave reviews. As Bob Tyrrell explains in *The Conservative Crack-Up*, the major media simply ignore conservative ideas and attempt to discredit conservative spokesmen, all the while complaining about Republican "sleaze campaigns." *With Reagan* is a cut above the condescending, I-knew-better-than-Reagan screeds so many of his colleagues have written, but Meese's loyalty and effectiveness as a Reagan advocate will only make him a more tempting target for the collection of liberal forces Tyrrell refers to as the *Kulturmog*.

Meese describes a White House that did not back down in the face of criticism, but he also gives us a revealing description of what he labels "the greatest domestic error of the Reagan administration," the TEFRA tax increase of 1982. Shortly after the 1981 tax cuts, in response to congressional and media calls to lower the deficit, seventeen congressmen, senators, and executive branch personnel—including David Stockman, Jim Baker, Dick Darman, and Ken Duberstein—began a series of meetings. The Gang of 17 worked out a proposal that became the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA). It promised to bring in $98 billion in taxes over three years and to cut spending by $280 billion over the same period. Congress passed the tax increase and ignored the spending cuts. Here was a cautionary example of what happens when process overtakes policy.

The result was higher taxes and a higher deficit:

> Spending for fiscal year 1983 was some $48 billion higher than the budget targets and no progress was made in lowering the deficit. Even tax receipts for that year went down—a lingering effect of the recession, which the additional business taxes did nothing to redress. . . . The TEFRA compromise. . . was a complete departure from our tax-cutting mandate, failed to reduce the growth of government spending, did not decrease the deficit, and divided the President from some of his most ardent supporters.

Ronald Reagan learned from this experience. George Bush didn't and hasn't. He too raised taxes in exchange for budget cuts that never materialized. He named—and, worse, retains—Richard Darman, one of the architects of Reagan's tax disaster, to orchestrate his deal with Congress. Darman's handiwork in 1991 hurt the economy even more than it did a decade earlier.

In late 1979 George Bush spoke at a large Republican women's gathering in Indianapolis that had become one of the early "cattle shows" for aspiring presidential nominees. All of the Republican candidates except Reagan spoke. (Reagan, however, won the straw poll.) I was there as publisher of *The American Spectator* and nervously introduced myself to Bush. "Ooh," he stammered, "that's a real egghead magazine." Then, hurriedly pointing me toward his factotum, "Do you know Jimmy Baker?"

Since then, Bush has become a friend of *The American Spectator* (due more to the charm of its editor-in-chief, I suspect, than to an appreciation of its "egghead" worldview). Yet his comment has always struck me as highly suggestive, not of his intellectual capacity, but of his tendency to undervalue the role of ideas in politics and governing. That Ronald Reagan did *not* make that mistake was a large part of his success, as Meese makes clear. And while Meese's book was written to set the record straight on the Reagan years, it also provides important lessons that it may already be too late for Bush to learn from. ❐

John Von Kannon, former publisher of The American Spectator, *is vice president and treasurer of the Heritage Foundation.*

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THE GREAT ONE:
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JACKIE GLEASON

William A. Henry III

Doubleday/321 pages/$22.50

reviewed by DONALD LYONS

There are cycles creators go through. First they die, in an atmosphere of sentimental tribute. After a while, there comes stage two, the unmasking biography that details every bender, fight, and betrayal. After another while, in stage three, a more balanced account appears, and attention begins to shift back to the work. (In many instances today, of course, the cycle starts to work during the subject's lifetime. It is hard to imagine a tell-all posthumous biography of Norman Mailer that will tell much new.) With Jackie Gleason, we are at stage two.

Poor Jackie was born in Irish Brooklyn in 1916 to battling parents—a feckless and alcoholic father who vanished when Jackie was 10 and was never seen again; and an anxious, worn mother who then got a job making change at a BMT subway station, where she had to stand for her whole shift in a booth neither heated in winter nor cooled in summer. The job barely kept the two in a small, dismal apartment. Gleason himself recalled their dwelling as "just a round table and an icebox and a bureau that everything went into. The light bulbs were never very bright and the rooms were always bare. But she was a good mother, and things were very pleasant, with a lot of affection." William Henry scolds Jackie for letting his exhausted mother fix their suppers unaided all those evenings ago, but he also refuses to let Jackie rose-tint his mother's character. "Perhaps," he grants, "the careworn, drunken, and angry woman was also gentle, intuitive and kind." But Henry ain't really buying it.

He cites Gleason's "deep distaste for any psychoanalytic speculation, especially when it involved other members of his family. In the world in which he was raised, to criticize one's relations . . . was an unpardonable breach of taste." Gleason "largely eluded meaningful discussion of his relationships with his parents."

Jackie Gleason was, after sordid years as a comic in sleazy clubs and as a minor player in films, to come into his own in the postwar springtime of television, nursery of such loud, raucous, angular characters as Milton Berle, Sid Caesar, and Lucille Ball (to name the best). In September 1952, CBS gave Gleason a variety hour, on which the most successful recurring sketch was "The Honeymooners," a tough comedy about four tough Brooklynites: Ralph Kramden, a fat busdriver; his peppery, bright wife Alice; and upstairs neighbors Ed Norton, a goofily lovable sewer worker, and his sane wife Trixie. Gleason was Ralph; in the classic shows Audrey Meadows was Alice; the sublime Art Carney was Ed; Joyce Randolph was Trixie—let the Muses sound the four names forever. Only in October 1955 did Gleason extract "The Honeymooners" from the context of his other, often inspired character sketches (the Poor Soul, Reggie van Gleason III, etc.) and begin the thirty-nine immortal black-and-white half-hour episodes. For the rest of his TV career, Gleason tried to recapture these glories of 1955-56.

The frequent thrust of the episodes was Ralph's effort to better himself and give Alice a better life; this would involve deceit, misunderstanding, and anger, but always final, resolving forgiveness and love. The programs remain, to this day, the jewel in the crown of American television—a dream marriage of artists and historical moment (the Glorious Fifties). Henry bestows lavish praise on "The Honeymooners" ("great dramatic art . . . heightened reality") but seems to think Gleason should have taken his art elsewhere: "Gleason did not aspire . . . to dark and unsettling art. Throughout his career, he remained a happy-endings man." Henry notes that "Jackie Gleason never let himself get drawn into discussions of the larger implications of Ralph Kramden's yearning for recognition" or "the larger meaning of Alice Kramden's unyielding insistence on her equality" or the "political agenda in his depiction of the poverty and thwarted materialism of the working classes." He contrasts Sergeant Bilko's dealings with race relations to the refusal of "The Honeymooners" to acknowledge "the ethnic stew that was Brooklyn" (do stews melt?).

In all this, Henry misses the boat—and he misses it twice. In the first place, it was precisely Gleason's cultural and religious and personal inhibi-

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tions against "psychoanalytic speculation" and "meaningful discussion" of his familial traumas that left them ready in his psyche as raw material for his art. (Importantly, all witnesses agree that Gleason, who had a habit of claiming responsibility for everything he touched, was for once right in claiming "authorship" of the Kramdens.) The old Gleason flat became the Kramden apartment (that description above will surely have rung a bell with lovers of the show). Pa and Ma and Jackie in some sense resulted in the Kramdens. This is how artists work; they transmute private—and, as such, uninteresting—suffering into public shapes. They do not get in touch with their "inner selves"; they ferociously yank about and lyingly reshape their shameful memories. Psychobabble is the death of song. And happy endings can be not moronic, but profound.

As for the dearth of topicality in Kramdenland . . . Look at TV today, where each episode of "L.A. Law" or "Murphy Brown" or "Beverly Hills, 90210" must—is it in the contract?—deal with either AIDS or racism or condoms or sexual harassment or the televisually challenged or (get ready) the L.A. riots. Prime time is blatant *Kulturkampf*. Never mind "The Honeymooners." Only compare yesterday's "Mary Tyler Moore Show" (hardly the brainchild of traditionalists) to "Murphy Brown" to gauge the damage wrought in popular art by ideology. The first clone of "The Honeymooners" was "All in the Family," inferior not least because ideologized. Imagine Ralph Kramden arguing with Norton about Suez or Little Rock. In this sense, the restraints exercised by the networks in the 1950s on what was publicly sayable made for healthy art, just as today's license makes for the reverse.

The rest of Gleason's life—apart from such bright spots as his performance in *The Hustler*—is a monotonous and stupefying parade of megalomania, gluttony, and drink, with fitful gleams of grace. His is not a story particularly worth knowing (any more than is, say, Hemingway's). Henry slogs dutifully on (though without, be it noted, the possibly softening contributions of Gleason's daughters or wives) but might have made better use of some of his space giving dates, casts, and plots of the Golden Thirty-Nine (at least). Trust the tale, not the teller, as D.H. Lawrence said. ❐

VEHICLES

Nigel Hawkes

Macmillan/240 pages/$39.95

reviewed by BROCK YATES

The Almighty blessed the English with countless laudable traits, but humility was not among them. Not only does English sagacity permeate the world of literature, politics, philosophy, and medicine, but according to London *Times* science editor Nigel Hawkes, the anointed of Old Blighty also dominate the realms of technology and high adventure. His book *Vehicles* recounts, according to its own jacket blurb, "the most extraordinary achievements since the invention of the wheel." Particularly "extraordinary" is that twenty-three of his fifty-two listed triumphs originated in the United Kingdom, and most of those in England.

Even keeping in mind the English penchant for self-worship, Hawkes soars to heights that might redden the cheeks of the most pukka grenadier. (While I demur from implying that the Brits are mountebanks and fibbers, one cannot forget the observation that the sun never set on the British Empire because God did not trust them in the dark.) Hawkes waxes eloquent about Sir Thomas Sopwith's America's Cup challenger *Endeavour 1*, which he describes as "the most graceful racing design for the America's Cup" while dolefully noting that, like legions of hapless British challengers for over a hundred years, this aesthetic triumph was waxed by the American defender.

Vehicles is a weird and illogical pastiche of human adventure and technological advance divided into five sections: the sea, automobiles, rail travel, conventional aircraft, and space. Many of the subjects, accompanied by superb maps, photographs, cutaway drawings, and diagrams, are automatic qualifiers for every such anthology: Magellan's circumnavigation, Joshua Slocum's similar singlehanded voyage in 1895, the USS *Nautilus's* first subpolar voyage, the 1907-08 Paris-Peking and New York–Paris auto races, the Lindbergh flight, Chuck Yeager's breakage of the sound barrier, Yuri Gagarin's brief ride, and the *Apollo 11* lunar landing.

But other chapters seem to have been added solely to propagandize the reader with the idea that England was *the* major player in the technological rough ride through the centuries. Hawkes deals, for example, with the British clipper *Cutty Sark*, which was surely a magnificent vessel, but notes only obliquely that the clipper ships were American in origin and that Yankee versions like the famed *Flying Cloud* dominated the seas until steam power and Suez ended the glory days of sail.

Hawkes lavishes considerable verbiage on a 1930 race from Cannes to Calais between the legendary Blue Train and a Bentley Speed-Six coupe driven by gentleman racer Woolf Barnato. The little skirmish was based on an informal wager that Barnato, three-time winner at Le Mans and chairman of the Bentley company, could not only beat Le Train Bleu from Cannes to the Channel, but could be at his club in St. James's before the old huffer pulled into Calais. This he succeeded in doing—without, by the way, the proprietors of the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Railway having the vaguest idea they were in a contest of any sort. The little feat created a considerable stir among the aristocratic motorists of the Royal Automobile Club, but was soon forgotten by all but the most devoted aficionados. Truth be known, the Bentleys were—and remain—overweight arks that rely on brutishly large engines for performance. Ettore Bugatti, whose machines are artistic and engineering masterpieces,

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was heard to sniff, "Bentley builds the fastest trucks in the world."

Similarly ridiculous is the chapter on Donald Campbell, son of land- and water-speed record-holder Sir Malcolm Campbell. Young Donald, who may epitomize the old canard, "Give an Englishman a piece of metal and he'll do something stupid with it," set out to one-up his late father's two records, and did. After crashing numerous times and bankrupting his successful machine-tool business, Campbell managed to careen across the Big Finish Line in the Sky in January 1967, when he nose-dived his jet-powered *Bluebird* into Lake Coniston at an estimated 320 mph. The boat was ten years old, hopelessly outdated, and a good 30 mph beyond its design speed. We also learn of the British dirigible R101, a 732-foot behemoth designed to overtake the Germans who, thanks to Count Zeppelin, had long enjoyed a lead in rigid-airship design. After its sister ship R100 had made a rocky and harrowing transatlantic crossing to Canada, Lord Thomson, Labour's first "secretary of air," attempted in 1930 to inaugurate regular dirigible service between London and India. Loaded with dignitaries who rode in an elegant two-deck gondola hung beneath five million cubic feet of explosive hydrogen, R101 departed into the teeth of a rising gale. It wobbled over the storm-tossed Channel at about 30 mph, then nose-dived into the rain-soaked French countryside near Beauvais and exploded. Forty-six of those on board were killed, including Thomson. So much for Britain's enthusiasm for dirigibles.

The book's British provenance no doubt prompted Hawkes to stress the Far Eastern seaplane route of Imperial Airways—begun in 1935 with Short S-23 C-Class Empire flying boats—over Pan Am's fabled Pacific Clipper service, which started a few years later. While Charles Lindbergh gets full coverage, the Wright Brothers are dismissed in a few hundred words. Jaguar's 1989 victory at Le Mans—its first in thirty-two years—is described in terms befitting a moon landing, while Porsche, which *owned* the event throughout the 1970s and '80s, is barely mentioned.

German cars get amazingly short shrift. Only the 1955 Mille Miglia–winning Mercedes-Benz 300SLR receives the ink it deserves, probably because it was driven by English superstar Stirling Moss. Two other German offerings, the Volkswagen Beetle and an early '30s steam locomotive, make the addenda at the back of the book. What happened to Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler's first cars, the Me262 jet fighter, and the classic BMW twin-motorcycle—not to mention the *Bismarck* and a host of other German planes, trains, and ships—is a mystery. Perhaps Hawkes is still pouting over the Luftwaffe's raids on Coventry.

Inevitably, trying to select the most significant, monumental, pivotal, earth-shaking of anything—be it the world's grandest hotels or the greatest double-play combinations or best opera tenors or finest pizza parlors—only causes arguments. What Hawkes has selected—narrow, quirky, and wrapped in the Union Jack as it is—is neatly packaged and brightly presented. Chauvinists of other nationalities might blanch at the omissions, but Englishmen everywhere will hoist one to Mr. Hawkes. On the other hand, Russian readers might reach for another liter of vodka when they read Hawkes extolling Nicholas II's imperial fleet's 16,000-mile voyage into the battle of Tsushima in May 1905, considering that the Japanese sunk thirty-four major Russian warships and killed 4,830 crewmen while losing but three torpedo boats and 110 sailors themselves. Although Americans are generally treated well, some might puzzle over the inclusion of a Civil War incident in which a small band of Union soldiers stole a Confederate train and ran it from Atlanta to Chattanooga, burning wooden railroad trestles along the route. That eight of the expedition's leaders were hanged and the rest imprisoned would seem to impose certain limits on the mission being described as an "achievement." Given such standards, one wonders why Hawkes chose to ignore such epic triumphs as Amelia Earhart's wide miss of Howland Island, the *Titanic's* maiden voyage, Scott's Antarctic trek, and the brilliant French employment of their Maginot Line. ❐

AFTER HENRY

Joan Didion

Simon & Schuster/319 pages/$22

reviewed by CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

In her last essay collection, *The White Album* (1979), Joan Didion went gardening with the wife of the governor of California and found her melodramatic:

> Nancy Reagan says almost everything with spirit, perhaps because she was once an actress and has the beginning actress's habit of investing even the most casual lines with a good deal more dramatic emphasis than is ordinarily called for on a Tuesday morning on 45th Street in Sacramento.

That's Joan Didion's problem, too. Incapable of turning down the volume, she ultimately makes even the most occasional essay sound like a chapter out of Hesiod or Samuel or *Burnt Njal*. "They float on the landscape like pyramids . . ." begins a piece on shopping malls. "Once, in a dry season . . ." begins her *Vogue* essay on not making Phi Beta Kappa in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968). As Louis MacNeice put it in "The Drunkard":

> The barmaid was a Madonna, the adoration
> Of the coalman's breath was myrrh, the world was We,
> And pissing under the stars an act of creation . . .

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It's this Wagnerianization of the quotidian that makes Didion's novels so unreadable—how do you keep the pitch so high when a character is opening her purse or driving to the store?

In *After Henry*, a dozen essays she has written over the last decade, Didion seems to have taken stock of her weakness for bathos and remedied it by choosing big, dramatic subjects to match the pretensions of her prose—starting with the eponymous Henry Robbins, Didion's editor at Farrar, Straus & Giroux, and, later, Simon & Schuster, who died of a heart attack in his early fifties in 1979. After the opening valediction, the book is divided into three parts: "Washington" (political writings), "California" (obiter dicta), and "New York" (last year's *New York Review of Books* article on the Central Park Jogger).

The three essays in the Washington section show a keenness for politics and a fathomless distrust of it, along with a rare patience for the whole story that a fan would call even-handed and a detractor conflicted. The complaint of Jonathan Yardley and others that Didion doesn't understand how Washington works may be correct, but misses the point that—as with H. Ross Perot—such ignorance may be feigned, even contrived. That would seem to be the case in "Insider Baseball," Didion's astute essay on the 1988 campaign, which uses Michael Dukakis's absurd staged games of catch on airport runways as a leitmotif. With no faith in the ability of the "process" to address real issues, Didion nonetheless blames the press for not doing so in the process's stead, for being

> willing, in exchange for access, to transmit the images their sources wish transmitted. They are even willing, in exchange for certain colorful details around which a key "reconstruction" can be built . . . to present these images not as a story the campaign wants told but as fact.

Didion's ignorance of Washington—again, if ignorance it is—puts her paradoxically above the Willie Horton–invoking partisanship of Sidney Blumenthal, Duncan Dayton, and other journalists who calumniated as "issueless" a campaign that was guilty of little more than ignoring the issues the *press* wanted aired.

"In the Realm of the Fisher King," on the Reagan White House, shows Didion excited by the intellectual ferment of Washington in the 1980s, but rather taken aback by its occasionally nutty camaraderie. One wonders what Didion wants here: slapping each other on the back, speaking in sports metaphors, trying to plow through *Modern Times*, and quoting Richard John Neuhaus on the collapse of the dogmas of the secular enlightenment may be inelegant and hokey, but it's what politicos *do* when they're not trading "access" for coverage.

Didion is no fonder of Nancy Reagan than she was when she met her in the mid-1960s, dismissing her as a superficial product of the Hollywood studio system, but along the way it becomes clear that Didion has even less regard for the caricatures that Nancy Reagan's critics drew of the Reagan years:

> This expectation on the part of the Reagans that other people would care for their needs struck many people, right away, as remarkable, and was usually characterized as a habit of the rich. But of course it is not a habit of the rich, and in any case the Reagans were not rich.

Of course the Reagans weren't rich, and the fact that they've been so persistently portrayed as such is enough to make one realize that the eighties can be summed up just as easily by the disingenuousness of that era's opinion leaders as by the "greed" of its business leaders. It's a measure of that disingenuousness that it's left to a woman who has gained a reputation as a compulsive Hollywood social-climber to point out that, in an age when one in forty Americans is a millionaire, Ron and Nancy could scarcely be considered more than "comfortable."

Now, the Chandlers were *rich*, and Didion is obviously very much at home with that turn-of-the-century family of carpetbagging autocrats. "Times Mirror Square," her essay on how they created the *Los Angeles Times*, and how the newspaper in turn created a Los Angeles culture that reflected the Chandlers' parvenu interests, is the best of the essays in *After Henry*. Didion is a dealer in types, and Harrison Gray Otis, founder of the Chandler

This is no ordinary economist.

He rose from genteel poverty in rural Tennessee to become a revered scholar and an inspiration for Reagan-era economic philosophy.
He won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1986, but he still hoes his own cabbages.

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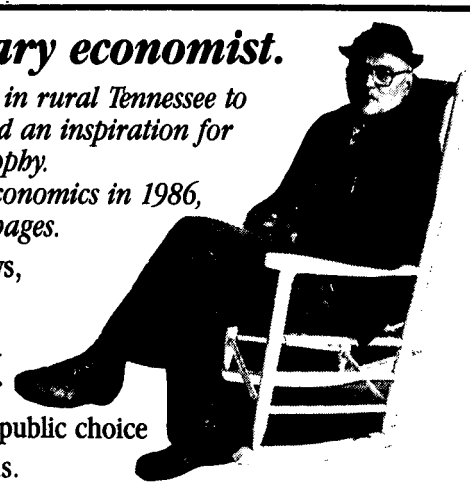

BETTER than PLOWING

and Other Personal Essays

James M. Buchanan

"A rare, intimate insight into how personal circumstances help shape some of the most influential economic and political ideas of our day."—Richard A. Epstein

The University of Chicago Press

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dynasty, is "in many ways the prototypical Los Angeles citizen." The history is easy to chart here: Otis and his descendents brilliantly and ruthlessly *conquered* Los Angeles, founding, developing, procuring water for, attracting industry to, and eventually owning practically the whole of the Los Angeles basin. Didion evokes the extent to which the city's cultural map remains patterned on the whims of the family: Pasadena for the old-moneyed WASPs; Hollywood for those—like the Jews—who didn't fit the L.A. lifestyle that was the Chandler brainchild. The account not only provides a rare window on the culture of Los Angeles outside of Hollywood, but also makes clear that Hollywood itself is an outsider culture in the city.

In her California pieces, Didion deals in big forces: the Santa Ana, earthquakes, floods. (She will certainly write the Great Los Angeles Riot Story eventually.) In "Girl of the Golden West," she seeks an explanation for Patty Hearst's conversion to the Symbionese Liberation Army by comparing her not only to Jim Jones but also the cannibals of the Donner Trail:

> This abrupt sloughing of the past has, to the California ear, a distant echo, and the echo is of emigrant diaries. "Don't let this letter dishearten anybody, never take no cutoffs and hurry along as fast as you can," one of the surviving children of the Donner Party concluded her account of that crossing. "Don't worry about it," [Hearst] reported having told herself in the closet after her first sexual encounter with a member of the SLA. "Don't examine your feelings—they're no help at all." . . . This was a California girl, and she was raised on a history that placed not much emphasis on *why*.

Didion often falls into this kind of bogus folkloricization—archaicizing the California of the television age, creating drama of duplicity. Surely there's no such thing as "the California ear," among the Californians Didion means. Surely Patty Hearst was not standing there in the closet muttering *Considerate la vostra semenza.* It's a nice connection, but, in a society as unmoored from its history as California is, who's to prove it true or false? Didion has long been fascinated by the Donner party, if her earlier essays on Sacramento are any indication, and again her writing becomes unwittingly self-referential: only where history is "abruptly sloughed"—completely sloughed—could one use a party of cannibals to symbolize a modern society of 30 million people.

But monomania, not velleity, is Didion's strong suit, which explains why, in the passion for Latin American societies she has carried through the past decade, she has chosen as subjects the two most Manichean societies in the New World: *Miami* (1987) is about the last outpost of the Cold War (tropical front), and Didion leaves one with the impression that all her subjects belong to the Omega-7 school of conflict resolution. *Salvador* (1982) is about the last outpost of European-style feudalism on earth, and if any of the locals differ significantly from the late Mr. Roberto d'Aubuisson, Didion didn't spend much time with them.

A quarter-century ago, in an essay on the movie industry, Didion complained that

> Stanley Kramer's *Judgement at Nuremberg*, made in 1961, was an intrepid indictment not of authoritarianism in the abstract, not of the trials themselves, not of the various moral and legal issues involved, but of Nazi war atrocities, about which there would have seemed already to be some consensus.

The same could be said of Didion: the historical events she deals in must be crude, epochal, and unambiguous to give any lift to the mammoth, novelistic type of journalism she seeks to practice. What she is after is tabloid material in Gothic prose.

Some of the old perpetual handwringing is present throughout *After Henry*: American elections aren't just important, they make us ask "why, finally, an American presidential campaign raises questions that go so vertiginously to the heart of the structure." The mugging of Felix Rohatyn's wife is described not as strange—nor as poetic justice, for that matter—but as a "clarion irony." Newport isn't merely a symbol, it's a "morality play." But although Didion cannot resist telling us that she knows Paul Mazursky and that her brother belongs to the California Club, there are fewer of the poor-little-famous-old-me passages that blew her cover of dispassion in earlier books, and made *The White Album* such a slog, passages like—

> Quite often I reflect on the big house in Hollywood, on "Midnight Confessions," and on the fact that Roman Polanski and I are godparents to the same child, but writing has not yet helped me to see what it means

—which begged the response that, if writing didn't help Didion, she should perhaps stop doing it.

But when she's attached herself to a large enough theme, like the fall of New York, Didion writes grandly. In "Sentimental Journeys," she recounts how the Central Park Jogger came to be perceived not as a victim but as a symbol in a battle over whose image of "what makes this city so vibrant and so great" would triumph in New York. Didion has the neurasthenic's gift for sensing impending disaster:

> These more privileged New Yorkers now felt unnerved not only on the street, where the necessity for evasive strategies had become an exhausting constant, but in even the most insulated and protected apartment buildings. As the residents of such buildings, the owners of twelve- and sixteen- and twenty-four-room apartments, watched the potted ficus trees disappear from outside their doors and the graffiti appear on their limestone walls and the smashed safety glass from car windows get swept off their sidewalks, it had become increasingly easy to imagine the outcome of a confrontation between, say, the relief night doorman and six dropouts from Julia Richman High School on East 67th Street.

Didion has always wanted to be such a late-twentieth century writer, to rise to such apocalyptic heights. Unfortunately, she has for most of her career resembled a follower of that most late-twentieth-century mass movement: self-help. All of her very best instincts have been towards herself, in keeping with the twelve-stepper's curiously capsized morality, whereby self-gratification is seen as generous, intolerance as caring, feeling good about yourself as glorifying God. If the 1980s have actually made her what her dust jackets have touted her as since the 1960s and what, ten years ago, she was most decidedly not—"one of America's finest journalists"—it is because she has taught herself a feeling for joy, pathos, and tragedy that do not bear directly on herself. If *After Henry* is better than Didion's last collection of essays, it's because Didion's moral sensibilities may be righting themselves. ❐

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DREADNOUGHT: BRITAIN, GERMANY, AND THE COMING OF THE GREAT WAR

Robert K. Massie

Random House/1,007 pages/$35

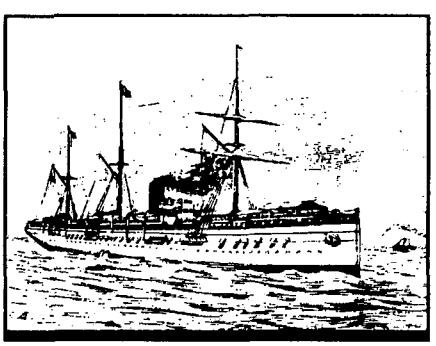
reviewed by R. J. STOVE

Sir Osbert Sitwell summed up the appeal of the Edwardian era in his remark that in the living memory of most Edwardian Englishmen, nothing had ever happened. The complacency of the age was astounding: Balfour was pleased to remember 1914-18 as "that great period of administrative activity." Churchill himself publicly claimed in 1908 (as a Liberal Party front-bencher) that talk of German expansionist threats was mere Tory scaremongering. Sir Norman Angell argued in 1910 that major war—since it damaged the winner as much as the loser—was finished. (End of History buffs, take note.) If the Edwardian age appears more glorious when set against the carnage that was to follow, World War I seems all the more horrible for the quiescence that preceded it, and Robert Massie's *Dreadnought* describes one very big aspect of the story: the then-unprecedented naval buildup of Britain, France, and Germany in the first decade of this century.

The hawks of the time were, by any post-1914 standard, doves. Even Massie's protagonist Sir John ("Jacky") Fisher, obsessed as he was with matching and surpassing German naval might, jeered at all qualms about the German army's designs on England: "You might as well talk of embarking St. Paul's Cathedral in a penny steamer. No, gentlemen, you may go home and sleep quiet in your beds."

Fisher's calls for ever more powerful battleships inspired fear among his subordinates, not on squeamish grounds, but because Fisher had the fatal unimaginativeness to gut his existing forces in favor of one new and untried development. They were proved right: the speed and firepower of his ships encouraged complacency about their thin armor, with disastrous results at Jutland. The idea that Britain could finish a war both victorious *and* exhausted—in other words, that Britain could be what Britain actually *was*, both after 1918 and after 1945—did not penetrate Fisher's energetic but less-than-capacious intelligence.

In fact, Fisher is the decisively modern figure in Massie's pages. His enemies, like Lord Charles Beresford, at least had the Edwardian virtue of not being afflicted with monomania. Beresford is easily



Dreadnought's most attractive character, a wild Irish peer and a swimmer against the cruel tides of meritocracy. When not giving Fisher heartburn, he terrified the Dervish population of North-East Africa; invented the tuxedo by hacking off the tails of his servants' evening wear; danced a Hibernian jig atop a sleeping elephant; took a more amiable elephant on board ship with him, soon teaching it to clew the mainsail by picking up a line with its trunk; came close, on a later occasion, to hitting Edward VII; and referred to his wife as "my little painted frigate."

In fairness to the optimists of the age, no German statesman or chief of staff was so self-destructive as to have actually *planned* four years of trench warfare. Beaverbrook, Lloyd George, and Northcliffe expected the English-speaking world to swallow some fairly spectacular propaganda, but the idea of a German death wish was not part of it. Massie reminds us of what seven decades have obscured: the tentative, bet-hedging nature of Prussia's initial rise; the almost ubiquitous German distaste for German unification; Wilhelm I's extreme reluctance to accept the German imperial crown at all ("*Ah, les braves gens*," he involuntarily cried while watching French cavalry charges in 1870); and the vociferous pluralism that existed even during Wilhelm II's reign.

Little, unexpected details evoke the atmosphere of the time. The modern assumption, for instance, that any visitor to any country must fill out forms at a dozen bureaucratic offices would have outraged pre-1914 Europeans. A telling illustration comes to mind: not long before Sarajevo, the passportless Richard Aldington embarked on a visit to Southern Europe, thanks to several gold sovereigns which he had received from one of London's leading poetry editors that morning. What an incredible procession of events: that a poet should have been paid in gold, redeemable anywhere on the Continent; that he should have been paid enough for his poems to let him go overseas; that he should have been able to begin his trip on the same day; and that he should have been able to go anywhere in Europe except Russia without needing to brandish an ID card.

Dreadnought can be compared to the better work of the late Barbara Tuchman in its narrative panache and abundance of illuminating anecdote, but it is blessedly free of Tuchman's shortcomings: sermonizing, dewy-eyed indulgence towards socialism, and an obsessive Teutonophobia that leaves readers of *The Proud Tower* with the impression that World War I should be blamed on Richard Strauss. In fact, all too many writings on the period imply an *approval* of the Old World's collapse—as if Lenin, Lloyd George, and the forcible rebaptizing of sauerkraut as "liberty cabbage" were indications of progress. Any good account of the twilight days of the Old World will convey—without its author necessarily realizing it—a nostalgia for the age's sheer *douceur de vivre*, and Massie's does just that. ❐

R. J. Stove writes for National Review, *the* Weekend Australian, *and* Quadrant.

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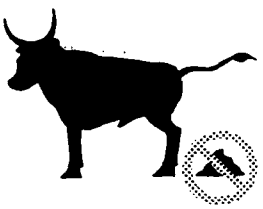

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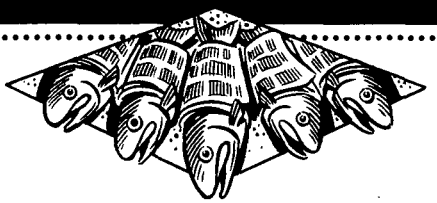

New York Times Magazine

Miss Marion Hart discourses on her body movements and other grisly matters in Kafkaesque effusions:

When I was 23, I conceived a child I knew I couldn't keep. The year was 1984, long after *Roe* v. *Wade* made abortion legal in this country. But as an American studying in China, I had the misfortune to get pregnant in a country where modern medical treatment and technology were far from the national norm.

Unable to speak the language fluently and unsure about which hospital would offer the best care, I was virtually powerless; the savvy that I'd always imagined I could fall back on if it ever happened to me was not applicable to my predicament. As my body moved toward a biological destiny my mind didn't sanction, I felt trapped inside my skin as all my plans—for passing year-end exams and for future travel and study—fell into jeopardy.

[July 12, 1992]

Philadelphia Inquirer

Encouraging spiritual developments in a country once considered depressingly lackadaisical, as reported in a famous American news organ's traditionally swank style:

Malaysian officials are considering a plan to introduce strict Islamic laws.

And they mean strict.

Get caught stealing and they'll lop off a hand. And that has local doctors wondering: If a punished thief comes strolling into their office hand in hand, will they be allowed to sew it back on? The government is willing to discuss the problem with the medical association. But Abdul Hadi Awang, deputy president of the fundamentalist Islamic party, has strong ideas.

He says the purpose of chopping off hands of incorrigible thieves is to shame them and to deter crime. "If doctors and surgeons start reattaching the hands, the whole purpose is defeated," he said.

[May 24, 1992]

The Nation

Another startling disclosure from a feminist gogue, the lovely Miss Katha Pollitt, on life in the largest all-male club in the world, Amerika:

And what about the double standard on violence? Given how few murders and assaults women commit, isn't it curious that female bad actors so frequently end up as major news stories? Novelty—the man-bites-dog argument—doesn't explain why these women are invariably portrayed as cold, calculating, sex-crazed and asking for trouble, while in stories about celebrated male murderers, it's usually the female *victim* who's depicted that way (or, in the case of the Happy Land fire, the male murderer's former girlfriend). No, the reason for the coverage is the misogyny that fuels the movies that give these crimes their tabloid names. What's next: "A real-life *Basic Instinct*," film at eleven? Meanwhile, I notice the Buttafuocos have hired separate lawyers. Stay Tuned.

[June 29, 1992]

Washington Post

At the podium of the tear-drenched, lowbrow, exploited, humiliated, down-and-out-in-Amerika Democratic national convention, the Rev. Jackson puts in a good word for Herod, the ur-Republican:

Lastly, there's a lot of talk these days about family values. Even as we spurn the homeless on the street, remember, Jesus was born to a homeless couple, outdoors. . . . a child of a single mother. But when Mary said Joseph was not the father, she was abused and questioned. If Mary had aborted the baby, she would have been called immoral. If she had the baby, she would have been called unfit, without family values.

But Mary had family values. It was Herod, the Quayle of his day, who put no value on the family. When Dan Quayle tries to ride both sides of this private religious moral issue, he is above his potato.

[July 17, 1992]

New York Times

An editorial first:

BERNSTEIN—Jeffrey Alan. On Friday July 10, 1992. Beloved brother of Phillip B. Bernstein and son of the late Sidney and Jennie Bernstein. Jeffrey was a resident of Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. and the Cameron Glen Care Center, Reston, VA. Jeffrey died of complications due to AIDS and the lack of care and funding for AIDS research by the Reagan/Bush Misadministrations. . . .

[July 12, 1992]

Plastics News

Another humanitarian speaks out in the fabled correspondence section of a prestigious intellectual review of the left:

I was shocked and appalled that you would give front page coverage (May 11) to the gun-toters of I.M.S. Co., who set themselves up as arbiters of the lives of others. Sure, having one's business burned is horrifying—but executing people on the street is hardly a civilized response.

What did Messrs. Hartman and Barrett plan to do if confronted with the angry mob? Proceed to commit murder? In the name of property rights?

If I.M.S. is so concerned with its (replaceable) inventory, then a more appropriate response would be to install metal storm plates over windows and doors, and put in a sprinkler system. That plus a clay-tile roof would withstand any firebomb attack. They can follow that up with fire insurance.

I would say that executing minority people who vent their frustrations in a riot is part of a fascist mind-set and deeply offensive to the many minority people who work in our industry. We have deep social problems in our country—for I.M.S. to set themselves up as the neighborhood executioners is grotesque and only further hurts the work we must do to improve as a nation.

—Jack Van Eck
Repro Plastics
East Haven, Conn.

[June 22, 1992]

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The Statesman

(Delhi, India)

In the pages of the esteemed and semi-literate *Statesman*, a dangerous Yankee muckraker is exposed:

Clinton's wife victim of 'dirty' politics

WASHINGTON, July 12.—In the "dirty politics" that characterize the 1992 US Presidential election scenario, the latest victim is Mrs Hillary Clinton, wife of the Governor, Mr Bill Clinton, the Democratic Presidential candidate, reports PTI.

Mr. Clinton himself has overcome charges that he is a philanderer and draft-evader and the public have begun to take him seriously as a man who has economic and political plans worth considering as an alternative to the Republican President Bush's record and independent Ross Perot's refusal to indicate clearly where he stands on issues. Now comes the attack on Mrs Clinton.

In a profile in the "American Spectator", writer Daniel Wattenburg [sic] calls her "the Lady Macbeth of Little Rock". The scare headline promises to expose her "hard-Left past and present".

"Hillary", he writes, "reckons herself as the next Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt" (never forgiven by Conservatives for allegedly turning her husband, Franklin Roosevelt, into a "Leftist" sponsoring such "Communist" programmes as social security).

[July 13, 1992]

Washington Times

A great American sociologist's views are vindicated at the 100th Anniversary Dinner of the College Republicans, though to no effect on the dismal cranium of Nino Abate, 29-year-old collegian:

Like many of her colleagues, she was doing her best to refute such recent critics as American Spectator Editor-in-Chief R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., who just wrote a book complaining that young conservatives aren't cutting-edge or hip enough.

"*Not hip enough*? Would you look at this tie?" grumbled Boston University's John Racho, 22, holding up a slice of purple paisley silk.

But at Thursday's celebration, the planned guest of honor was, after all, Shirley Jones, otherwise known as Mrs. Partridge, hardly a performer of the cutting-edge variety. (Neither she, nor comedian Rich Little, was able to attend.).

"Tell Emmett Tyrrell to [get lost]," piped in Nino Abate, 29, of Arizona State. "We *are* hip."

[July 10, 1992]

Saginaw News

A genius speaks out on the squeal page of a great American gazette for forcing "the rich" to subscribe to the *Scottsdale Progress* (and why was this not a plank of the Democratic National Cry-In?):

. . . George Bush and his predecessor Ron Reagan needed 12 short years to triple this nation's debt. It took the nation 200 years to accumulate $1 trillion in debt. The Republican party has been built on greed, indifference, injustice and narrow-mindedness toward the lower and middle classes and minorities since tricky Dick Nixon.

If the downtrodden and repressed classes wise up and stop voting for these vacuous conservatives, who never intend to help these people in the first place, then they would see some economic windfall come their way. . . . Time to tax the rich and feed the poor until they are rich no more!

I have returned to Saginaw for my 20th reunion from Douglas MacArthur, and I have a journalism degree from Central Michigan University, and I have spent the past four-and-a-half years as a sports writer at the *Scottsdale Progress*, a small liberal newspaper near Phoenix. I lost my job because the conservative rich won't subscribe to the paper.

—Kim Taylor
Saginaw Township
[July 7, 1992]

Sunday Oregonian

The wild doings and lurid delights of Penny Flenniken, revolutionary kindergarten teacher of northeast Portland:

I showed [a friend] the scars on my right hand where I was branded "one of the boys" by Elijah. The scratch became infected, and it is a visible reminder that we were joined as childhood "blood brothers." I knew from then on that teaching Elijah and inner city children like him would be my work.

I took Elijah to his grandmother's house after school that day to show her what her grandson had done to me. But she was visually impaired.

She told me that Elijah's father, who died two years earlier, had loved Elijah the most. I had made the mistake that day of reading a story to the class about a father and his son. Elijah took the book and threw it across the room and then did the same with a chair he had been sitting on.

As we moved out of the room and into a safer place in the office, the "branding" took place. It didn't hurt me physically, but it touched my heart, and I knew it was a ritual that mattered to both of us.

He had torn my flesh, and I was no longer that white teacher come to do her good work among the black children. I was picked out and touched more than skin deep. He went inside of me with his rage, and I became angry for him as well. And I became his spokesman [sic]. I became his instrument for change. He had torn away at my complacency.

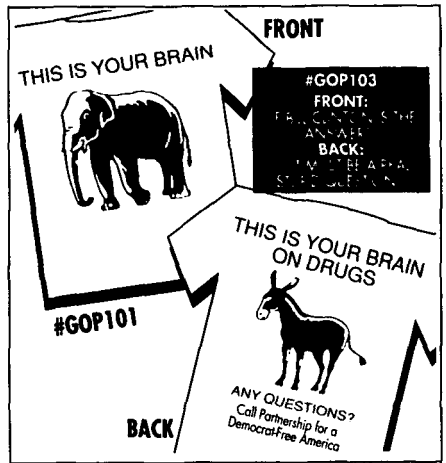
[July 5, 1992]

Publishers Weekly

Always darkest before the dawn:

"I'd say the biggest hope that we have right now is the AIDS epidemic," offers William Vollmann, sipping from a glass of dark rum in his living room in a quiet section of Sacramento, Calif. "Maybe the best thing that could happen would be if it were to wipe out half or two-thirds of the people in the world. Then the ones who survived would just be so busy getting things together that they'd have to help each other, and in time maybe the world would recover ecologically, too."

[July 13, 1992]



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prostitutes" ("Fidel's World," *TAS*, July 1992).

No! No! No! No such places existed! Please! Most Cuban-Americans have already pulled half their hair out by the roots and ground their teeth down to the nubs from the blizzard of idiocy we have to endure about Cuba in every magazine article and TV documentary that touches on the subject in this country. We expect a break from the *Spectator*.

Some resorts in pre-Castro Cuba had a color bar. But none barred by nationality. Any Cuban wealthy enough or well-connected enough could go any place an American could. Believe me, I certainly did.

Not all of the fault lies with misinformed Americans, however. Many of their sources for information on Pre-Castro Cuba are Cubans of an academic or media background. Which means people usually belonging to the "Revolution-betrayed" school of thought. Which means people who applauded Fidel for the first few years. Which means people who don't want to appear like complete fools now.

—Humberto E. Fontova
Covington, Louisiana

I would like to add two observations to Patrick Symmes's very fine and accurate article. I visited Cuba in July 1991 and can corroborate many of the conditions he describes.

Cuba is one of the most racist societies in the world today. The museum Symmes mentions features a history of the revolution. Blacks are notably absent from the leadership, and I do not recall seeing any blacks in traversing at least three floors of displays and photos.

Entrance to most places was based on skin color. We befriended a black nightclub emcee. When we started to enter the Cuba Libre hotel, the police started to converge until it was apparent he was with us. In no upscale restaurants, shops, clubs, including the Tropicana, did I see any black customers, although the majorities were Latin, mostly Cuban.

As I wandered through Mirador, an upscale residential suburb of Havana, I did not see any blacks residing there. . . . Another victory for Jesse Jackson, and Nelson Mandela. . . . *—Jim Reid*
San Gabriel, California

P.S. On the perimeter of Havana is a park that displays two bronze plaques embedded in granite showing two readily identifiable profiles. I was told the name of the park is the Ethel and Julius Rosenberg Memorial, in honor of these revolutionary heroes. Any final reservations about their innocence?

Wild Oates

John Podhoretz is a little harsh on Joyce Carol Oates. He seems to have misread the book. Which are two ways of saying I liked *Black Water* better than he did (Book Reviews, *TAS*, July 1992).

Not that I'm an Oates fan; everything Mr. Podhoretz says about her hysterical, cliché-ridden style is true. However, I read the book not as a feminist tract, but as an allegory on the terminal inanity of liberalism.

Kelly, after all, is seduced not by the Senator's looks or personality, both of which are presented as singularly repulsive, but by his politics. This is as good a paradigm as any of the otherwise intelligent bleeding heart, who lets ideology overrule both head *and* heart. And look where it gets her!

I'm aware that Oates might not have meant it that way, but there it is.

—James Redding
West Pawlet, Vermont

Sherman's Early March

W.T. Sherman did serve in the Mexican War as Paul Johnson says in his review of *Jefferson Davis* (*TAS*, July 1992), but not in Mexico with other future commanders, as Johnson implies. Sherman was in California, broadening his horizons as administrator, surveyor, and engineer; but his sense that lack of combat would lead to lack of promotion made him resign to broaden them further as a banker, lawyer, and first president of LSU. He thus did not share the geographical and intellectual narrowness of viewpoint that Johnson notes in Sherman's strategic opponent Davis, who did fight in Mexico before becoming a politician.

Further, it was Sherman who pointed out what no biographer of Davis has since seemed willing to face: all Davis's representative rant about the Honor of the South was given the lie on its own terms by his willingness to run in the election of 1860 but to abide by its results only if he were successful.

—William Vesterman
Piscataway, New Jersey

Former KGB?

A salute for Avigdor Haselkorn's rundown of continuing "former KGB" espionage in Western Europe ("Why Spy?" *TAS*, July 1992). But in his careful effort to explicate "former KGB" spy programs in the West, Haselkorn fails to achieve the desired "unified field theory" that could clarify the cohesion of all these actions with one elegant equation: CIS = USSR.

A single plan of espionage like those Haselkorn outlines may of course take decades to implement, as moles and spies are moved from agency level to level in positions of the foreign government under surveillance. Haselkorn describes intelligence infilitrations that could only have been accomplished through these same decades of patient penetration: programs started in the sixties, seventies, and eighties. One of these, he notes, was set up in 1967, and yet "remained active after the disintegration of the Soviet Union." But the necessary implication escapes him.

In other words, the transition of the KGB to the "former KGB" (the Russian FIS) . . . *necessarily* implies the continuation of the same plots, plans, or efforts that were underway ten years ago; the same organizational and management structures; the same general intelligence objectives . . . as obtained in, e.g., 1982, when the KGB went by its familiar name. So where is the democratization? Where the shucking off of the Communist yoke? . . . *—Roch Steinbach*
Portland, Oregon

While Quebec Burns

I don't imagine that there is anyone among your subscribers who holds Tom Bethell's columns in higher esteem than I. But one small detail has grown rather irritating: the column's title remains "Capitol Ideas." Surely it hasn't escaped the notice of *TAS*'s editorial staff that for quite a while Mr. Bethell's beat has been California, very far from Washington, D.C. Until your correspondent returns to the East Coast, I suggest that you change "Capitol Ideas" to a heading that would better reflect the content of Tom Bethell's submissions. "Stanford and Sodom-by-the-Bay-Watch" would probably be the most honestly descriptive title, but if you put your minds to it I'm sure you could come up with something more short and sweet. *—Richard Bostan*
Coquitlam, British Columbia

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Can An Intelligent Person Be Religious?

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

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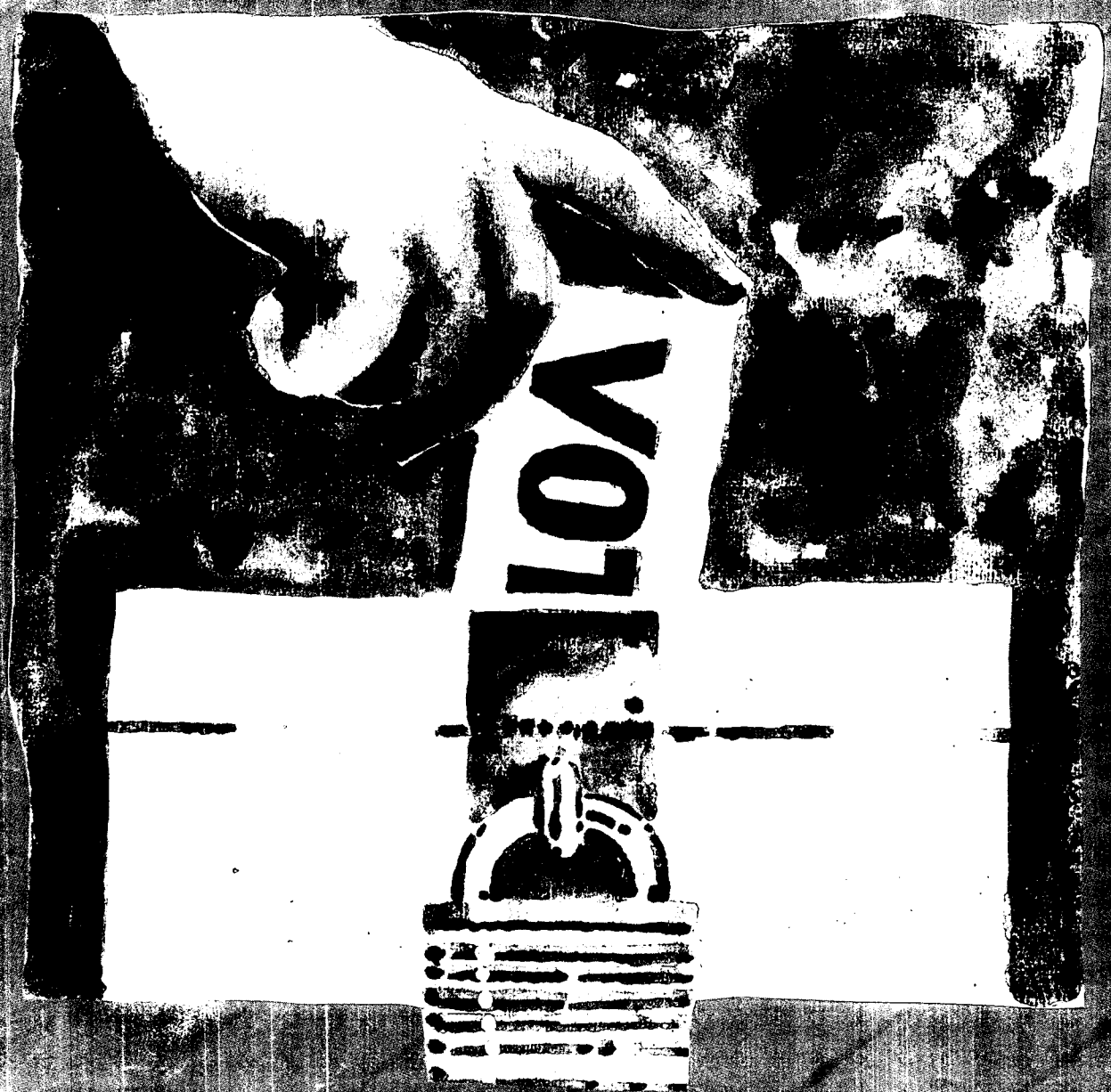

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